Nova Scotia
Advisory Council on
the Status of Women

MAKING CHANGES

EIGHTH EDITION

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A Book for Women in Abusive Relationships

**Nova Scotia
Advisory Council on
the Status of Women**

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Content is constantly being updated. For the most recent edition visit our website
women.gov.ns.ca
and follow the links to our publications on violence.
For additional resources, visit
nsdomesticviolence.ca

A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

I am not the cause of my abuser's violent behaviour.

I have the right to feel safe.

I have the right to not be hit.

I do not like or want to be abused. I do not have to take it.

I have the right to say "no."

I have the right to be treated with respect.

I am an important human being.

I am a worthwhile woman.

I have the right to raise my children in safety.

I do have power over my own life.

I can use my power to take good care of myself.

I can decide for myself what is best for me.

I have the right to be believed and valued.

I can make changes in my life if I want to.

I have the right to live in peace.

I am not alone. I can ask others for help.

I have the right to end the violence.

PREFACE

If you are a woman experiencing abuse or if you have previously been abused, this book is intended to help you.

You can read this book in whatever way you want. You don't have to start on the first page. You don't have to read it in order. You don't have to read it all now. Read the parts that are most important to you and the rest later.

You can rip off the front cover, tear out pages, or write in it. Read the book when you are ready and when you are safe.

You may want to leave this book at work or with a friend. You may have friends you wish to share this book with.

If you have questions about the information in this book, or if you are in a crisis, call your local transition house (see directory, page 118) or visit www.nsdomesticviolence.ca

If you are a worker who offers support and counselling, or a friend or family member of a woman experiencing abuse, you may find this book helpful as well. For friends and family members, we have added a chapter beginning on page 70.

This book could also be helpful to anyone who wants to make a difference in her/his community. Lives, families, and communities are changed when individuals, service agencies, and institutions take action to end violence against women by providing help for women who are experiencing abuse. Change is happening, but remember: it can often be slow and challenging.

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INTRODUCTION

Women can be abused physically, emotionally/psychologically, socially, verbally, sexually, and financially. Maybe you are being abused by your partner, husband, boyfriend, or some other person in your life. Maybe you think you are being abused, but you are not sure. We hope this book can help you decide what is happening to you and what you might want to do about it. While we have used the term "he" when referring to the abuser, the information contained in this guide is also intended for women in abusive lesbian relationships. There are differences in the way we think and talk about abuse by women, but some things may be the same.

You are not alone. Women from many different backgrounds are abused. They have different levels of education and income. They are from all age groups, races, and cultures. Some have disabilities. They may have different experiences and their stories may not be quite the same as yours, but there will be similarities.

Remember:
- There is no excuse or reason for abuse.
- The abuse is not your fault.
- You never deserve to be abused.
- Abuse of any kind is never okay.
- There are people willing to help.
- You are not alone.
- It takes a lot of courage to face these issues.

INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse of a woman is an abuse of power and can be a criminal act. It is about exerting control in a relationship. It is not about problems with anger management or addictions.

Abuse takes many forms:
- physical
- verbal
- sexual
- emotional/psychological
- spiritual
- financial

Abuse happens in all different kinds of families and intimate relationships. Women are most often abused by their husbands, their boyfriends, the men they live with or have had a relationship with in the past. But women are also abused in dating relationships, and they are abused in lesbian relationships. Women with disabilities and elderly women also report abuse by family and caregivers.

People call abuse of women different things:
- wife battering/wife assault
- woman abuse
- domestic violence
- physical or mental cruelty
- family violence

- violence against women
- wife abuse/spousal abuse
- assault
- intimate partner violence

Some Forms of Abuse Are Crimes

These forms of abuse are criminal offences in the *Criminal Code*:

- physical assault: hitting, punching, choking, etc.
- sexual assault
- child abuse
- threats to harm
- withholding food and medical treatment
- threats to kill
- taking your pay cheque
- stalking or criminal harassment (creating fear by repeatedly following, communicating, or attempting to communicate with you or any member of your family)
- human trafficking

TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical

- choking, kicking, punching, slapping, grabbing, poking you
- pushing, shoving, spitting at you, pulling your hair
- physically restraining you, stopping you from leaving
- holding or hugging you when you say "no"
- any unwanted physical contact
- abusing your children
- treating you roughly
- throwing things

Sexual

- forcing you to have sex (rape)
- forcing you to have sex with others for his financial gain (human trafficking)
- threatening to harm your reputation
- putting you down or comparing you sexually to others
- getting back at you for refusing to have sex
- sleeping around, or threatening to
- treating you as a sex object
- forcing you to look at pornography
- hounding you for sex or forcing certain positions
- accusing you of having sex with other men

Verbal

- verbally threatening you (telling you to stop crying … or else)
- calling you names (stupid, slut, crazy, bitch, whore …)
- yelling, shouting, or raising his voice at you
- abusing your children
- being sarcastic or critical
- blaming you repeatedly for things that go wrong
- insulting you or your family
- laughing in your face

Financial/Economic

- controlling you by not paying the bills
- refusing to give you money for groceries, clothing, things you need
- spending all the money on things he wants (alcohol/drugs, gambling, trips, cars, sports)
- forbidding you to work outside the home
- taking your money or your pay cheque
- not letting you take part in financial decisions
- in human trafficking cases:
  - forcing you to have sex with others for his financial gain;

  - not allowing you to purchase your things directly (eg. clothes/accessories).

Emotional/Psychological

- intimidating you, making you afraid
- putting you down
- making you think you're stupid or crazy
- not telling you what he is doing and lying
- telling sexist or woman-hating jokes
- destroying your belongings
- hurting your pets
- putting you down, ignoring you
- embarrassing you in front of your children, making scenes in public
- not letting you see your friends or being rude to your friends
- being jealous of your friends, family, or accomplishments
- being nice to others but changing his personality when with you
- turning your children against you
- comparing you unfavourably with other women
- not allowing you to express your emotions (denying your feelings)
- taking your passport or threatening to have you deported
- in human trafficking cases:
  - your partner may keep your belongings such as your personal identification (eg., passport, health card, or driver's license);
  - may isolate you from your family and friends by moving you to an unknown location;
  - he always knows where you are and you always need to inform him what you are doing; or
  - control you, and not allow you to make decisions for yourself

Using Children

- Making you feel guilty about the children
- Using the children to relay messages

- Using visitation to harass you
- Threatening to take the children away

Abuse of women is violence. It is not acceptable. Certain forms of abuse are criminal offences. See page 3 or contact your local police or transition house for further information.

WHO ABUSES WOMEN?

Abusers can be found in any type of family or intimate/close relationship. Abusers can be:

- husbands
- lovers
- ex-husbands
- relatives
- live-in partners
- caregivers
- boyfriends

Men who abuse women can be of any age, race, religion, or economic background. They can have any kind of job and any level of education.

Abuse also occurs in lesbian relationships.

In cases of human trafficking, the abuser may be an intimate partner whose intent for entering the relationship was to groom a woman for, and exploit through, human trafficking.

The one thing all abusers have in common is that they all believe it is okay to hurt people, even those they love.
Violence is never okay, no matter what.

Abuse in Lesbian Relationships

Abuse does happen in some lesbian relationships. There is a common misconception that abuse occurs only in relationships between men and women. This is untrue. Commonly held stereotypes and prejudice about lesbians are factors that have contributed to lesbians' reluctance to speak out about violence in their relationships.

There are some similarities to male violence against women:

- It is difficult for women to leave abusive relationships.
- Lesbians may learn, as men do, that in our society violence is a means to gain power and maintain control.
- The pattern of abuse and the forms of abuse are the same: physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, verbal, social, and financial.
- The abused woman feels responsible for her partner's violence and emotional state.
- Abuse is always the responsibility of the abuser and is always a choice.

There are also differences from male violence against women:

- There are few services specifically for lesbians in abusive relationships.
- The abused woman fears that she will not be believed about the abuse due to lack of awareness of violence in same sex relationships.
- The abused woman fears losing friends and support within the lesbian community.
- Homophobia in society denies the reality of lesbians, including their relationships. When abuse exists, attitudes often range from lack of interest to generalizations about relationships being unstable or unhealthy.

Woman Abuse in Aboriginal Communities

Although woman abuse occurs in all cultural, racial, and religious groups, women in Aboriginal communities face a number of additional difficulties when they want to get support or leave an abusive situation. Women who must leave their community often experience the distress of having to abandon their support systems, kinship, and cultural roots.

The following are some barriers to leaving:
- limited access to information (e.g. legal rights) and support services (e.g. transition houses, crisis centres) for women in isolated and minority communities
- lack of transportation services
- loss of kinship ties, support network, cultural community, and sense of identity
- strong community loyalities and distrust of other systems

If services are accessible, women often face other barriers and concerns, including:
- fear of being misunderstood by support staff
- lack of resources for treatment or support
- feeling that services are not suited to their culture
- misunderstanding and/or fear of the justice system and law enforcement officials
- lack of anonymity in seeking services on reserves, which are usually very small communities
- reluctance to involve a justice system that is seen as racist

Woman Abuse in African Nova Scotian Communities

Women suffering abuse in African Nova Scotian communities also face additional challenges and barriers to leaving their home and getting help. They may face the prospect of leaving kinship, social support networks, and their own communities. This may be more difficult if they live in isolated communities and have limited transportation services.

Some issues African Nova Scotian women face when leaving an abusive relationship may include:
- Historical oppression, discrimination, and unequal treatment have resulted in mistrust and fear of justice and social service systems and reluctance to turn to these agencies for help.
- The extended family is highly valued in African Canadian communities, so many women feel pressured to keep silent about abuse or downplay its severity because of kinship.
- Reporting abuse may be seen as betraying partner and furthering stereotypes of African Canadian men.
- Concerns that their partner may be subjected to racism makes it even more difficult for women to report their abuser.
- Fear of being shut out or blamed by the community often leads to silence about abuse.
- It is important for African Nova Scotian women to secure support from members, especially other women, from their own communities.

Abuse of Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities are often more vulnerable to abuse and face additional barriers. Society's negative images and myths about women with disabilities increase the risk of abuse.

What makes women with disabilities more vulnerable to abuse?
- The disability often gets used as the basis for the inequity in the relationship.
- Destruction of property can often be more dangerous if an assistive device or a helping dog is harmed.

- They may not have access to support services.
- Women who have difficulty walking, understanding, hearing, or speaking may be unable to flee, get help, or report their abuse or may not be believed when they do.
- They are often not considered to be capable parents if parenting support is needed.
- Some women may not be aware they are experiencing abuse.
- The abuser may have blamed them for their illness or disability or have told them they are making it up or seeking attention.
- They may have been made to feel worthless by the abuser.

Mandatory Reporting

The law protects people living at home who are unable to protect themselves because of mental or physical ability. Under the Nova Scotia *Adult Protection Act*, anyone who suspects that an adult may need protection is required to report this to the Department of Health and Wellness adult protection staff.

The Adult *Protection Act* serves to protect people aged 16 years or older living in the community who are experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect and cannot physically or mentally protect themselves. In order to be considered 'in need of protection', the adult must be living at a significant level of risk of serious physical or psychological harm. About 75% of persons assisted under the Act are seniors.

Woman Abuse in Immigrant and Temporary Resident Communities*

(Definition can be found on pg 11)

The wide variety of backgrounds women from immigrant and temporary resident communities come from make it difficult to list common issues that may prevent them from leaving an abusive relationship.

Some common issues that may be encountered by women from immigrant and migrant communities when for leaving an abusive relationship could be:

- Fear of losing immigration status and the threat of deportation;
- Concern that reporting abuse will have a negative impact on their ongoing immigration applications;
- Isolation and fear of being turned away from one's community;
- Fear of bringing dishonor and shame to the family, or the consequences of doing so;
- Fear of being without male protection especially from women from patriarchal cultures, and to some, the lack of independent economic resources apart from their male partners;
- Language barriers;
- Lack of information about Canadian laws, their rights as women living in Canada, and/or information about available social services;
- Cultural barriers and differences from society, and from institutions designed to support women in abusive relationships (real or perceived);
- Experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and racism;
- Distrust of police, which is especially the case for those who came from source countries where corruption exists;
- Fear of losing their children to state institutions; and
- Difficulties in living in a shelter environment, and possible cultural stigma for accessing support services.

Throughout this text, we use the term **immigrant communities** *to include permanent residents to Canada which includes family class, economic immigrants and refugees.* **Immigrant communities** *also includes protected persons as defined in Section 95 of the Immigrations and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), and Canadian citizens born outside of Canada.* **Temporary Resident to Canada** *includes individuals with a work permit, study permit, temporary resident permit, or a visitor record in Canada. This includes individuals like foreign students, temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers, and the humanitarian population who are primarily refugee claimants (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act): protected persons as defined in Section 95 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), and Canadian citizens born outside of Canada. Both* **immigrant** *and* **temporary resident communities** *may include members of visible minority communities.*

Source (adapted): Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2011). Canada Facts and figures: Immigration Overview Permanent and Temporary Residents 2010. Retrieved November http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/research-stats/facts2010.pdf on November 22, 2011. Source (not verbatim): Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2011). Canada Facts and figures: Immigration Overview Permanent and Temporary Residents 2010.

Abuse of Older Women

Often considered a hidden crime, abuse against older women is a complex issue and in many cases is part of the continuum of family violence. In 2009, 70% of the calls to the Nova Scotia Senior Abuse Information and Referral Line were prompted by suspected abuse or neglect of an older woman. Abuse of older women is usually carried out by a spouse, adult child, grandchild, or a close friend.

There are many stereotypes about which older women are victims of abuse. In fact, any older woman could be at risk of abuse. Most older women who experience abuse are competent, not dependent on other people and do not require constant care.

Negative social attitudes toward aging and older people ("ageism") is one key reason many people believe that only vulnerable older adults - those who are disabled or socially disadvantaged - are susceptible to abuse.

Ageism, in combination with sexism and disability issues, creates an environment where older women are often devalued and invisible. Abusers who practice ageism often rationalize their abuse and financial exploitation (such as misuse of the older woman's belongings or money).

Some issues and facts related to the abuse of older women:

- Senior abuse is often hidden, taking place within family relationships and shaped by generational experiences. As a result, the abusive behaviours may not be recognized as abuse: sometimes an older woman may not even recognize that what is happening to her is abuse.

- Older women may be less willing to report abuse by their spouse or adult children to the authorities for fear of losing relationships which are important to them. Older women also have a large emotional and financial stake in their relationships, home and community.
- Older women tend to view the available help and options, such as transition services/shelters, as being only for younger women.
- Some older women may be fearful to report abuse because of retaliation.
- It is common for abused older women to have protective feelings towards their children. Older women feel guilty or blame themselves if their adult child becomes abusive, assuming it reflects something they did as a mother.
- Older women tend to have fewer financial resources and therefore can be more greatly affected by financial abuse.
- Women are more likely to have disabling conditions than men as they age and are therefore at a high risk of injury. They are also more likely to be caregivers to husbands with dementia.
- Spousal abuse also impacts older women and happens in three main ways:
  - Spousal violence in a younger couple can "grow old" along with the couple;
  - Spousal violence may start with retirement or at the onset of illness;
  - Spousal violence can also begin in a relationship entered into when older.

If you are concerned about the abuse of an older woman and require information about available services, or would like to know more about senior abuse in general, please call the Senior Abuse Information and Referral Line at 1-877-833-3377.

WHY DOES ABUSE HAPPEN?

There is no easy answer to why men abuse women. Due to historical and societal prejudices, women have not been considered equal citizens. There were many things women were not allowed to do. In families they were often treated like property, belonging first to a father or other male relative and later to a husband. The man was the legal head of the household and ruled the family. It was okay for a man to use force to control his wife or solve family problems. Experts argue that men still learn to be aggressive and to express frustration in more violent ways than women.

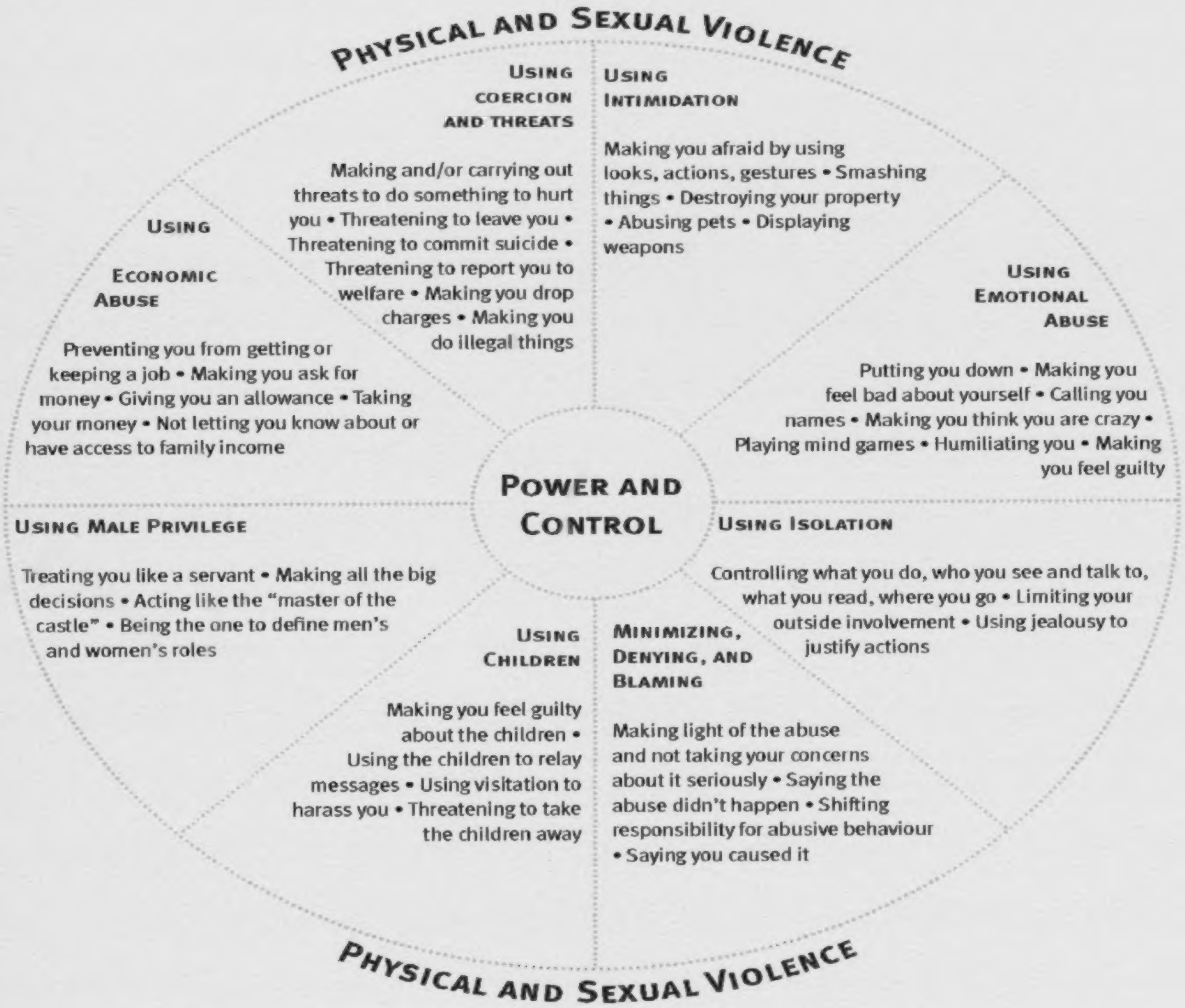
One result of this history is that women remain unequal to men in many ways, especially economically. This makes women more vulnerable when violence occurs, and it makes them less able to leave an abusive relationship.

Healthy relationships are based on equality and trust. Abuse of women is about power and control, the betrayal of trust, and lack of respect. If you are in an abusive relationship, it's about using force or threats to make you afraid. It's about using fear to control you. The diagram on page 15 shows how power and control are at the centre of abusive behaviour.

A man may abuse a woman because he …

- has learned this behaviour in his own family
- feels it is an acceptable male role to control women
- believes violence is a way to demonstrate male power
- has low self-esteem
- thinks that there are few, if any, consequences for his violent acts

No matter why he does it, it is not your fault. Every man who is abusive must take responsibility for his behaviour. No one has the right to hit or hurt you. No matter what you do, you do not deserve abuse. You do not ask for it.



PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

USING COERCION AND THREATS

Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt you • Threatening to leave you • Threatening to commit suicide • Threatening to report you to welfare • Making you drop charges • Making you do illegal things

USING INTIMIDATION

Making you afraid by using looks, actions, gestures • Smashing things • Destroying your property • Abusing pets • Displaying weapons

USING ECONOMIC ABUSE

Preventing you from getting or keeping a job • Making you ask for money • Giving you an allowance • Taking your money • Not letting you know about or have access to family income

USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Putting you down • Making you feel bad about yourself • Calling you names • Making you think you are crazy • Playing mind games • Humiliating you • Making you feel guilty

POWER AND CONTROL

USING MALE PRIVILEGE

Treating you like a servant • Making all the big decisions • Acting like the "master of the castle" • Being the one to define men's and women's roles

USING ISOLATION

Controlling what you do, who you see and talk to, what you read, where you go • Limiting your outside involvement • Using jealousy to justify actions

USING CHILDREN

Making you feel guilty about the children • Using the children to relay messages • Using visitation to harass you • Threatening to take the children away

MINIMIZING, DENYING, AND BLAMING

Making light of the abuse and not taking your concerns about it seriously • Saying the abuse didn't happen • Shifting responsibility for abusive behaviour • Saying you caused it

PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

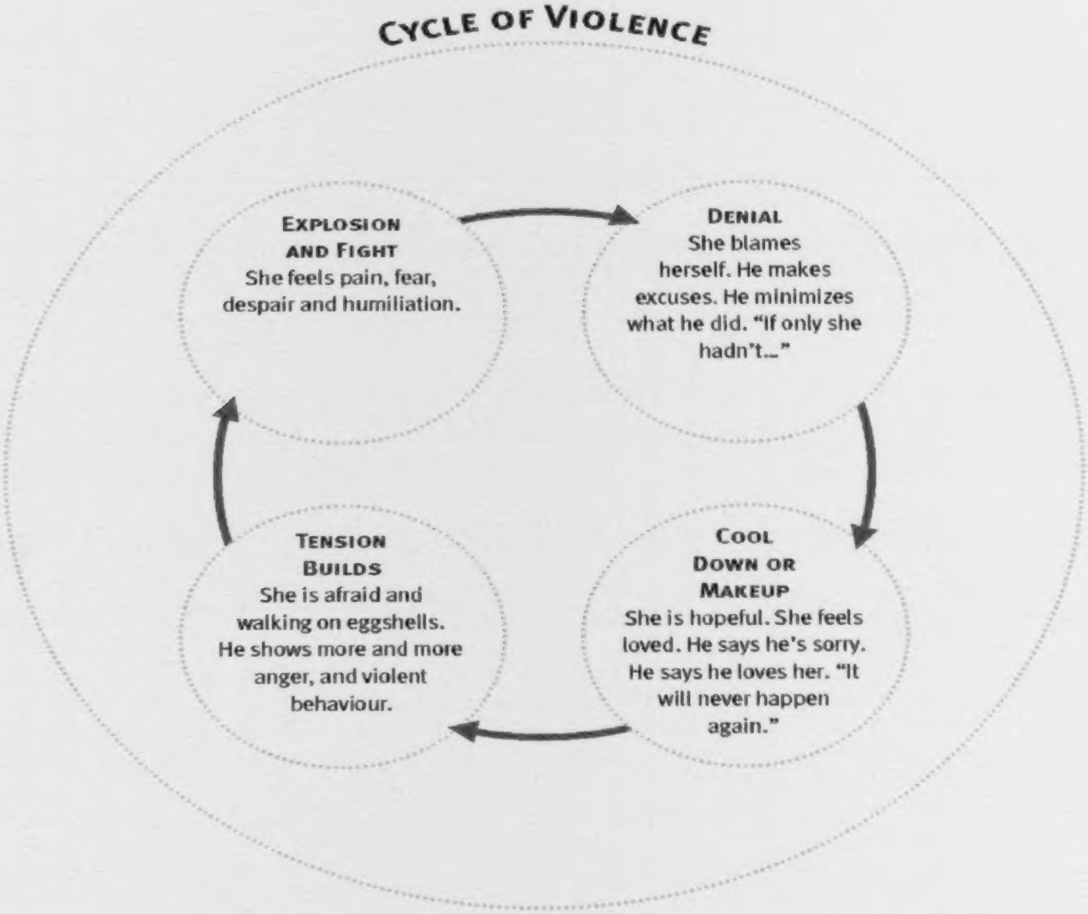
Adapted from the Duluth Model "Power and Control Wheel", developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs (DAPI), Duluth, Minnesota: theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf

Myths about Abuse

Myth	Fact
Family members are always kind and loving to each other.	Family members can also be brutal and threatening.
A man's home is his castle, and he rules the roost.	Society often accepts the man as the family head and therefore the boss.
Men who abuse their partners are mentally ill.	All abusive men are not mentally ill. Abusive men learn to use violence in certain situations. Most abusers are not violent in all relationships.
Women provoke abuse, so they deserve it.	Nobody ever deserves to be abused. This is an excuse abusive men make for not taking responsibility for their violent actions.
Women can leave if they want to.	There are many reasons why women are unable to leave: financial or emotional dependency, low self-esteem, fear, a belief that marriage is forever, social/ cultural/family pressures.
Only poor women get abused.	Abuse can happen to anyone. Women with low incomes are more likely to use shelters. Middle and upper income women are more likely to use other resources.
Alcohol/drugs cause a man to abuse.	Alcohol/drugs may trigger abusive behaviour in some men or make it worse. Alcohol/drugs do not cause the abuse. If he stops using alcohol/drugs it doesn't mean he'll stop abusing.
He loves her; it happened because she made him jealous.	Love is about trust and respect. Abusive men often get jealous for no reason. She is not responsible for his jealousy. He chooses to feel this way. He can choose non-abusive ways to react.

IS THERE A PATTERN TO ABUSE?

For many women, abuse and violence start early in the relationship. For others it may start later – quite often during pregnancy. He may use different types of abuse in different situations. Whatever the type of abuse or pattern, violent and abusive actions and behaviour are his way of maintaining power and control over you.



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

EXPLOSION AND FIGHT
She feels pain, fear, despair and humiliation.

DENIAL
She blames herself. He makes excuses. He minimizes what he did. "If only she hadn't..."

COOL DOWN OR MAKEUP
She is hopeful. She feels loved. He says he's sorry. He says he loves her. "It will never happen again."

TENSION BUILDS
She is afraid and walking on eggshells. He shows more and more anger, and violent behaviour.

Adapted from the Manitoba Department of Justice Cycle of Abuse: www.gov.mb.ca/justice/domestic/cycleofviolence/index.html

There is no predictable pattern of violence, but generally there is a cycle of violence that many women recognize. It may look like this:

- First, the tension and anger build up. Sometimes there's an argument. She may try to keep the peace.
- The abuser explodes and becomes violent or makes threats about becoming violent. He hits her, threatens her (or something/ someone she loves), verbally abuses her, or abuses her in some other way.
- Then there's a cool-down, make-up, or calm stage. The abuser may say he's sorry or he may deny it ever happened. The abuser may promise it will never happen again and may reinforce this by doing something nice (buy gifts, dinner, flowers).
- There is a time of peace, which is usually temporary. It may be a control tactic to keep her in the relationship.
- Sooner or later, the tension builds up again, his need to control increases, and the abuse starts over.

You cannot predict what will start or end the cycle; no one thing triggers the violence. Over time the phases are likely to get shorter, closer together, and his violence will increase in intensity.

Is It Abuse?

Some women say, "But he loves me." Maybe he does love you, but if he does, then he would trust you and he certainly wouldn't harm you. There are other ways to behave with people you love. He can choose not to abuse you and not to treat you the way he does. It's up to him. He has to take responsibility for his behaviour.

Maybe you feel sorry for the abuser. Lots of women do. Maybe you think you can change him. Perhaps he has problems. Maybe he was abused himself. Maybe he's insecure now and needs you to make him feel better about himself. But you can't make someone feel good about himself. He has to learn to do that without putting someone else down. If you refuse to let him treat you badly, it doesn't mean you don't love him.

Regardless of why he does it, an abuser's behaviour cannot be justified. Abuse is wrong.

There are other ways to deal with problems. There are other ways to express anger. He has a choice. If he chooses to use violence, he has to take the responsibility for that, not you. And if he hurts you physically or sexually, that's a crime.

If you are asking yourself if his behaviour is abusive, you probably already know the answer. Trust yourself. Trust your instincts.

Are You Being Abused?

Does he ...

○ get jealous when you're around other people
○ make fun of you in front of your friends and family
○ destroy or threaten to destroy your possessions
○ praise you one minute and put you down the next
○ call you names or threaten you
○ ignore you or not take you seriously
○ make you choose between your friends/family and him
○ blame you when things go wrong

○ push you around or hit you
○ threaten to take the children
○ say abuse is wrong but hits the walls and yells at you
○ harm or threaten to harm your pet
○ threaten to harm your family members/friends
○ threaten to kill or harm himself if you leave, call the police, or tell someone

Do you think that …

○ you have to ask permission to spend money or go out
○ you are at fault when things go wrong
○ you have to "make things right" just for him
○ you have to do what he wants … or else
○ you must make excuses for your partner's behaviour
○ you have to check in if you go anywhere
○ you have to put your dreams and goals on hold
○ he is trying to run your life
○ maybe all the terrible things he says about you are true

Do you feel …

○ afraid to make decisions for fear of his reaction or anger
○ isolated from friends, family, and activities
○ afraid to tell him if you have a good time
○ afraid to express your own opinions or say "no" to something
○ trapped, unable to go out without his permission
○ your joy in life diminishing
○ afraid to break up with or leave him

If you answer "yes" to some of these questions, you may be in an abusive relationship. You are not alone.

What Does Abuse Do to Women?

A woman who is abused often lives with constant fear, worry, guilt, and self-blame. She may begin to feel worthless, helpless, or ashamed. She may feel like a failure. She will almost certainly feel degraded.

The symptoms of physical abuse can be black eyes, broken bones, bruises, burns, concussions, cuts, scratches – even death. If a woman is beaten while she is pregnant, she may lose the baby. The effects of emotional or psychological abuse cannot be seen but can be just as harmful.

A woman experiencing abuse of any kind may feel that no one could ever love her. She may feel stupid or ugly and all alone. This is what the abuser wants. It makes it easier for him to have control over her. After a while, she may begin to lose her self-respect. She may begin to use alcohol or drugs to dull the pain.

For some women, the hardest thing is feeling the loss of:
- self-respect
- respect for him
- someone to be with
- hope
- happiness
- love
- companionship
- safety
- family and friends
- independence
- future goals and dreams
- laughter and joy
- her own identity
- Freedom
- Ability to make decisions

If you are being abused, you may feel unhappy or tired all the time. You likely feel depressed, trapped, or afraid. You may feel isolated from family and friends.

Children* Who Witness Abuse

If you have children, you may have decided to put up with the abuse for their sake. But children who witness abuse may be experiencing abuse themselves.

Children often see and hear more than we think. They have probably seen or heard the violence and it will likely have affected them.

Children who witness parental violence can be as severely affected as children who are direct victims of physical or sexual abuse.

They may:
- be scared, confused, and unhappy
- have physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches
- blame themselves
- have night-time difficulties such as insomnia, nightmares, or bed-wetting
- behave aggressively or become withdrawn
- cling to their mother or try to take care of her
- exhibit disrespectful/abusive behaviour towards their mother
- feel responsible for the violence
- seek punishment by lying or stealing (believing punishment means love)
- be abused too

Throughout this text, we follow the definition of the child in Nova Scotia to mean a person under sixteen years of age (see the Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act, Section 3(1)(e)).

Children who witness abuse may develop vulnerabilities which could put him or her at risk of further victimization such as bullying or cyberbullying. At the same time, some other children who internalize the violence they witness can act as the bully themselves.

Bullying is a repetitive action that is meant to harm or disturb another person, and can take many forms including verbal, physical, emotional, social, and online or `cyber'. Similar to the abuse these children witness at home, bullying is expressing aggression and an abuse of power.

In today's online world, cyberbullying is becoming more common and more accessible to younger people. Cyberbullying is repeated aggressive behaviour conducted on cyberspace which includes email, social media, text messaging, and mobile phones. Cyberbullying is harder to get away from because it can happen anywhere and anytime, as long as the child or youth is connected online or on their mobile phones. The bullies can remain anonymous, or assume a fake identity. Whatever happens in cyberspace is open to the global public, and can easily be retrieved and forwarded to others.

Children who witness abuse may either become the victim or the perpetrator. Sometimes, they can even be both, as experiencing abuse in their home life puts them at risk of being entrenched in a cycle of violence even at a young age.

Children who witness abuse often learn that it's all right to hurt people they love. They learn that it's normal for someone who loves them to hurt them, but it's not!

Children from violent homes may end up believing that:

- it's okay for men to hit, boss, or control their partners
- it's okay for men to bully and control women
- this is the way that families behave
- violence is a way to win arguments and get your own way
- big people have power they often misuse
- all men are bullies who push women and children around
- punishment means love
- women are weak and can be pushed around
- men are strong and should be in control
- women can't take care of themselves or their children
- you can only express anger through aggression and abuse
- "real men" don't feel or show weakness, fear, sadness, or confusion
- women are naturally inferior to men
- to be in a relationship, women have to put up with abuse

The Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act (1991) recognizes that repeatedly witnessing domestic violence is a form of child abuse. **Anyone who suspects that a child is being abused is required by law to report it.** *Child protection offices and children's aid societies are listed on page 91 and the Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services are listed on page 108 of this book.*

Is it Abuse or Human Trafficking?

Sometimes an abusive intimate relationship between a man and a woman becomes exploitative when the male partner forces or manipulates the woman to provide sexual services to others for his financial benefit. Another way of understanding what's going on is when the "partner", the trafficker, initiates a staged dating or romantic relationship or friendship with the victim, (who is often a woman), to groom her and facilitate her sexual exploitation.

When this kind of relationship happens, it becomes human trafficking under the *Criminal Code of Canada* (Section 279.01 to 279.04).

IS IT HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Does he...

- Force or manipulate you to provide sexual services to other men or women?
- Control your every move?
- Make you call or check in every minute?
- Isolate you from your friends and family?
- Move you to an unfamiliar area or community?
- Play mind games, which may include blaming, shaming or blackmailing you to follow his orders?
- Threaten to hurt you or your loved ones?
- Hurt you physically, emotionally or psychologically?
- Take your money, and doesn't let you buy anything?
- Take your possessions including your personal identification such as your driver's licence, passport or health card?

Are you able to...

- Leave the relationship any time?
- Move freely?

- Make your own decisions?
- Stop providing, or refuse to provide sexual services to others without fear of being harmed or punished?
- Keep your own money?
- Go to the doctor or hospital at any time?
- Speak to other people freely?

If you answer no to any of these questions, you may be in a trafficking situation. If it is safe to do so, call 911 and ask for help, or you can also go to a Transition House near you. If you or someone you know may be in this situation, you can also call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. If you are looking for support services for victims of human trafficking, or if you are looking for more information, you can visit www.women.gov.ns.ca/trafficking .

WHY DO WOMEN SOMETIMES STAY

Abuse can damage a woman and her children, both physically and emotionally. Society's beliefs and stereotypes about women in abusive relationships make things more difficult for women. For example, a woman can feel like a victim all over again if people keep asking her why she stays. She may feel more ashamed, helpless, or guilty.

Women stay for a variety of reasons. There are often real barriers to leaving. These barriers can be emotional, cultural, religious, financial, or related to other practical matters. Sometimes, especially in the case of human trafficking, the victim may fear her life, and is afraid to leave or feels she cannot leave her situation.

Women from different racial or cultural groups, immigrant and migrant women, lesbians, or women who are disabled often face other challenges. Language barriers, racism, discrimination, fear of being deported, isolation, and disbelief are just a few of the additional barriers to reporting and dealing with abuse.

If you are a new citizen, or a permanent or temporary resident of Canada, you may be unfamiliar with the laws of Nova Scotia. Perhaps your faith or tradition says you must stay at home with your family, even if you are being abused. You may have had bad experiences with the law, the medical profession, the court system, or government agencies. You may fear you or your partner being deported.

Some laws have changed. You have the right to be protected. Whatever your background, if you are being abused it could be a crime. You have the right to stop that crime.

If you are a friend or counsellor of someone who is being abused, it is helpful to show some understanding of the barriers to leaving. It is also important to offer practical help, advice, and encouragement when she is ready to do something about the situation.

While support services for women are limited, there are resources available. The listings at the back of this book will help you find services.

Barriers to Leaving

Financial

- no income or income that is lower than her partner's
- having to leave the family home
- lack of job skills
- belief that partner will not pay maintenance or support
- insufficient government assistance
- shame in using government assistance

Social

- lack of support or isolation from family and friends
- inadequate support from police, legal system, etc.
- lack of affordable child care and housing
- lack of information about legal rights
- isolation from community

Cultural/Religious

- victim blaming, denying, or minimizing the abuse
- pressures on women to feel responsible for relationships
- religious beliefs about women's roles, and/or marriage
- belief that a loving woman can change her partner
- belief that a woman needs a man to be whole
- social disapproval of separation and divorce
- belief that the children need a two-parent household
- Cultural pressures such as shame and family honour
- Lack of culturally competent support services and institutions

Emotional

- feeling of not being able to cope alone
- fear of threats made by partner
- fear that he will get back at you
- fear of going to court or calling the police
- feeling responsible for failing and for breaking up the family
- fear of loneliness
- loving your partner and hoping that he will change
- fear of being deported
- believing your partner when he blames you for his abuse
- blame or fear of rejection by family or friends
- fear of losing your partner by leaving temporarily
- fear of his threats to keep the children
- fear of his threats to commit suicide or kill you and the children
- Self-shame in identifying as a victim
- Not realize that you are a victim

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

This book is not about telling you what to do. It's about giving you information to make whatever choice is best for you. The information in this section is intended to help you protect yourself and decide what to do next.

You may have some important choices to make. You are the only one who can decide what is best for you.

MAKING CHOICES

You may feel scared or helpless. Most women do if they are being abused. But if you want things to get better, somehow you need to make changes, even though you are afraid. It may be very hard. But try to remember, you are not alone. You can get help along the way.

Many women who have been faced with these choices have decided that they didn't deserve to be abused, so they left for a while or for good. This can be a difficult decision, and everyone deserves to be safe and to be treated with respect.

Whatever choice you make, there are people, organizations, and agencies that can help you get some support and assistance (see page 88 for the directory of services and information).

Talking about It

A lot of women find it very helpful to talk to someone about what is happening. You may find it helpful to talk with someone you can trust – a friend or relative, a spiritual leader or elder, a doctor, or a counsellor.

Lots of women don't know anybody they can talk to. You can talk to someone at the transition house nearest to your home. You don't have to stay there to get help and advice. You could also look in the phone book to find someone else to help you. Most phone books put the number for a help line on one of the front pages, or you can look in the Yellow Pages under social service organizations and women's organizations and services. If you live in a rural area there may be 1-800 numbers so you can call these organizations and services without charge, and the call will not show up on your phone bill (see the directory starting on page 88 for 1-800 numbers on various services).

You might feel ashamed to get help for something that seems so private. It is important to remember that we all need help sometimes. It's okay to ask for help, even though it might be difficult or embarrassing. It takes a lot of courage to reach out for help.

Most women have done a lot to try to make things work, to reduce the violence, and to protect the children. Remember how strong you can be.

WHAT IF YOU STAY?

You may decide to stay with your partner, at least for now. Perhaps you feel there is still a chance to keep things together. You may feel that your relationship is really important and you've put a lot into it. Many women do. But you should know that while things may get better for a while, in most cases the abuse tends to get worse later.

If you are a permanent or temporary resident to Canada, it's helpful to get information about your legal status. Depending on your status, you will have different rights regarding staying in Canada, getting a job, accessing services, and so on. You could consult an immigration lawyer, legal aid, or any agency that supports immigrants in their settlement process.

Setting Limits and Protecting Yourself

If you do decide to stay, you may need to set some limits. You can decide what has to change and what behaviour is acceptable if you are going to stay, and you can decide how long you will give him to make these changes. If changes don't happen in the time you set, you may ask him to leave, or depending on the situation, you may decide to leave.

If you do decide to stay with your partner, your safety and the safety of your children come first. Protect yourself. It's very important to have an emergency and personal safety plan.

THE *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ACT*

The *Domestic Violence Intervention Act* is a provincial law designed to provide another tool to protect victims of family violence through emergency protection orders. It came into effect on April 1, 2003.

The act is meant to be used with the *Criminal Code*. In appropriate cases, the police will lay charges under the *Criminal Code* and the victim or designated person may also seek an emergency protection order. The *Domestic Violence Intervention Act* does not replace the need for a shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. In some cases the victim may still need to leave the home.

The law provides another way to help victims and clearly sends the message that domestic violence is never acceptable.

Definitions in the Act

Victim
…a person who is at least sixteen years of age and has been subjected to domestic violence by another person who
(i) has cohabited or is cohabiting with the victim in a conjugal relationship, or
(ii) is, with the victim, the parent of one or more children, regardless of their marital status with respect to each other or whether they have lived together at any time

Respondent

...any person against whom an emergency protection order is sought or made

What is an Emergency Protection Order?

An Emergency Protection Order allows the justice system to take immediate action to protect a victim of domestic violence in an emergency situation. It is...

- available 24 hours a day
- issued by a specially designated justice of the peace
- effective as soon as the respondent is told about it
- remains in effect for as long as directed by the justice of the peace (up to 30 days)
- reviewed by a Justice of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

What can an Emergency Protection Order do?

- give the victim
  - exclusive occupation of the home (up to 30 days)
  - temporary possession of specified personal property (such as a car)
- give temporary care and custody of a child to the victim or another person
- direct a peace officer
  - to remove the respondent from the home
  - to accompany the victim or respondent to the home to supervise removal of personal belongings

- order the respondent
  - to stay away from any place identified in the order
  - not to contact the victim or another person
  - not to take, sell, or damage property
  - not to commit any further acts of violence against the victim
- prohibit the publication of the victim's name and address

When is an Emergency Protection Order appropriate?
An Emergency Protection Order is granted only if a designated justice of the peace is satisfied that domestic violence has happened and that the situation is serious and urgent.

The justice of the peace must look at the nature and history of the domestic violence, the existence of immediate danger, and the best interests of the victim or any child or other person in the victim's care.

Who can apply for an Emergency Protection Order?
A victim or person acting on behalf of the victim with approval of the justice of the peace can apply any day of the week from 9 AM to 9 PM.

The following designated people can apply at any time:

- peace officers
- victim services workers employed by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice or the police or RCMP
- designated employees of a transition house that is a member of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

What are the offences under the act?

It is an offence for anyone to

- fail to comply with the provision of an order
- falsely and maliciously make an application
- obstruct any person who is performing any function authorized by an order
- publish any information in contravention of an order

How can a victim use the law?

If you believe that an Emergency Protection Order will help you, call the Justice of the Peace Centre at 1 866-816-6555, or ask the police, Victim Services, or a transition house worker to apply for an order on your behalf.

Know What to Do in an Emergency

If you do have to act quickly, it's important to be prepared. Here are some things to think about:

- Where can you go in an emergency? You will need to have somewhere safe.
- How will you get there? Is there someone who can come and get you? Can you take a car, taxi, or bus?
- Is there someone you can call to tell what is happening and where you are going?
- Is there someone you can leave your pets with? (Check with local animal shelters. Bide Awhile Animal Shelter in Dartmouth will take pets for short-term care if they have space; call 469-9578).
- If you need to go to a transition house, do you know how to get there?

Pack an emergency bag in case you need to leave quickly. You can't take everything. Just take what you'll need for a few days. You can leave the bag with a friend if you have to.

If you don't feel safe doing that, you can make a list of things to take and make sure you know where to find them in an emergency:

- money, financial statements, credit cards
- clothes for you and the children for a few days
- any medicine you or your children may need
- house keys, car keys
- identification
- important papers – birth certificates, marriage certificates, social insurance numbers, divorce papers, custody documents, court orders, restraining orders, income tax returns
- health cards for you and the children
- medical and vaccination records
- First Nations status card
- immigration/citizenship papers, passports for all family members
- work permits
- the children's favourite toys, books, and special blanket
- copies of your lease, mortgage or other deeds, mortgage statements
- picture of your spouse/partner (for identification)
- your address/phone book
- car registration, driver's licence, car insurance
- your favourite possessions/books (things that give you comfort)

It's probably a good idea to get legal and other advice now, even before there is an emergency.

If you are in danger, get to a phone and call 911 immediately. All 911 calls are recorded and kept as evidence.

MY Emergency Plan for Safety

This is my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to it and how to best get myself and my children to safety. I will keep this plan in a safe place.

○ Establish an escape route. (Know where you can go to be safe, if only to make a phone call.)

○ If you've been abused before, make sure the police are fully aware of the situation.

○ Have emergency numbers programmed into the phone (shelter, neighbours, those who will help you – not 911).

○ Speak with your neighbours and people you can trust. Let them know what's going on so they can be watching out for you and call police if they become concerned.

○ Call a transition house and talk to the staff. You may want to work out a code word so they know who you are if you have to call them in a crisis.

○ Hide some money away if possible (you may need emergency taxi fare) and a spare set of car keys in order to leave quickly.

○ Talk to the children. They need to know which neighbour to run to in an emergency and how to use the telephone to call police.

NONVIOLENCE

Negotiation and Fairness

- Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
- Accepting change
- Being willing to compromise

Non-threatening Behaviour

- Talking and acting so that you feel safe and comfortable expressing yourself and doing things

Economic Partnership

- Making money decisions together
- Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements

Respect

- Listening to you non-judgmentally
- Being emotionally affirming and understanding
- Valuing your opinions

EQUALITY

Trust and Support

- Supporting your goals in life
- Respecting your right to your own feelings, friends, activities and opinions

Shared Responsibility

- Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work
- Making family decisions together

Responsible Parenting

- Sharing parental responsibilities
- Being a positive non-violent role model for the children

Honesty and Accountability

- Accepting responsibility for self
- Acknowledging past use of violence
- Admitting being wrong
- Communicating openly and truthfully

What Happens When You Call the Police?

When the police come, they will stop the violence. Then they will question you and the abuser. They should not talk to the two of you at the same time or in the same room.

Tell the police what happened. Give them details. Show them any injuries or damage to you, your belongings, or your home. Tell them about anyone who might have heard or seen anything. They may interview neighbours, friends, or medical staff.

The police may arrive with a camera and take pictures of you and of the scene. Or they may ask you to go to the police station to have photographs taken. These pictures may be used as evidence and could help you when you apply for custody of your children or limited access for the abuser.

The police will lay charges where evidence supports this, and they will arrest and remove the abuser in all cases where charges are laid. Their main concern should be for your safety and the safety of your children.

What Happens If the Police Lay Charges?

If there has been physical abuse of any kind, the police should charge the abuser with assault. If this does not happen, ask why. **Assault is a criminal offence.**

If the police lay charges, they may need help from you in collecting evidence:

- Ask the police to keep torn or bloody clothing and any weapons he used (such as bottles, ropes, scarves, sticks, knives, etc.).
- If you are hurt, go to the hospital or to a doctor. Tell them you have been assaulted. Make sure they make a record of your injuries.
- Get photos of your injuries, broken furniture, or any other damage. Ask a friend to take pictures. Get her to sign and date them as this may be important evidence in a trial.
- Save any threatening answering machine or voicemail messages, letters, emails etc.
- Keep a record for yourself. Record times and dates and what he did to you.

The police may arrest him, especially if they think he may hit you again when they leave. If they take him into custody, it is usually only for a few hours, but sometimes it might be overnight.

If the police charge the abuser, they should refer you to the Victim Support Service or a transition house, whether you decide to leave at this point or not. These agencies can give you information about police procedures and community resources. They can also offer emotional support.

What If You're Still Afraid of Him?

If the police don't take him into custody, and you are afraid to be alone with him, tell them.

Tell the police if you think he will assault you again after they leave. If you decide not to leave, get the names of the police officers in case you need to contact them later.

If you want to leave, ask the police to wait while you get your things. Get them to take you to a safe place like a transition house. If you have children, you have every right to take your children with you. **The police will not help you remove the children later without a court order.**

If you have to leave in an emergency and you decide not to go back for a while, the police can go with you later to get the rest of your personal belongings. They will protect you, but they're not allowed to help carry your things. You may want to bring a friend along to help you.

What Happens When He's Charged?

If the abuser is charged with a criminal offence like assault or uttering threats, he will have to sign an undertaking before he is released. An undertaking is a promise to appear in court at a certain date and time. This may also require him to have no direct or indirect contact or communication with you or your children, to stay away from your address, and/or to stop drinking and using drugs.

Ask the police to notify you when he will be released. Ask if he has been required to sign an undertaking setting conditions on his release. If the police or the court don't give you a copy of the undertaking, ask for one. Contact the police who made the arrest, their victim services, or a Victim Services office run by the Department of Justice (see directory, page 120).

When criminal charges are laid you may be required to go to provincial court later to testify. It would help to ask Legal Aid or a transition house for advice about this. Court preparation for those subpoenaed to testify in criminal court proceedings is a specific service offered by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice's Regional Victims' Services Program, in cooperation with the Public Prosecution Service.

If your first language is not English, you may need a translator or interpreter to help you deal with the police, the courts, or transition house staff. Most of these agencies provide this kind of support if you need it. Because some ethnic communities are quite small and people are likely to know one another, care must be taken to make sure that confidentiality is maintained and your privacy respected.

You should know that:

- You can ask for an interpreter.
- You should be given the interpreter's name before the interpreter knows your name.
- You can refuse an interpreter who is known to you and your family.

DECIDING TO LEAVE

You may have had to leave the abusive situation in an emergency more than once. It may have been your only real choice. But you can also decide to leave, even if it's not an emergency situation. You can choose to leave for a while or forever.

This can be a very hard decision to make. Some women find that going away for a while works for them. It may show their partner that they are serious about the need for change. Other women find that despite promises to change, the abuse continues and the only way to stop it is to leave for good.

It might help to talk to someone you can trust or a person at the local transition house. They can give you support. You can talk to them on the phone. You don't have to give your name. You don't have to stay there to get their help. Whatever you choose to do, believe in yourself.

Will You Take Your Children?

Whether you leave in an emergency, for a short time, or for good, you have every right to take your children with you, especially if you think they will be in danger if you leave them behind.

If you take your children with you there may be fewer problems later. You may decide not to go back or you may decide to get a divorce. If you don't have your children with you, it can take months for the courts to help you get them back, and you may have trouble getting custody. If you want to take the children out of the province, you should definitely get legal advice first.

In any case, it's important to get legal advice right away regarding custody of your children (see directory for Legal Aid, Legal Information, and Services on page 106).

Where Can You Go to Be Safe?

You need to go somewhere safe. Would he look for you? Where might he look? Think about where he wouldn't find you. Maybe you can stay with a friend or a relative. If you have the money, you may want to go to a hotel.

Some women go to transition houses. These are emergency shelters for women – with or without children. There are several shelters in Nova Scotia (see pages 118 to 119). They all take children and have staff who work with them. Many of the transition houses, however, are not wheelchair accessible. None of them allows pets.

Transition houses usually have secret addresses so women can be safe there. When you call the transition house they will arrange to meet you. If the police are called and it's an emergency, they may drive you there. The phone numbers of all the houses are listed at the back of this book.

At the transition house you will be safe. There will be someone there to listen to you. Staff can advise you about medical, legal, and financial problems. They will help you look at what you can do. They will not force you into anything. You can decide what's best for you.

What you discuss will be private. However, there are exceptions to this, which counsellors will explain to you or you may ask about. One important exception is that anyone who suspects a child is being abused must report it. This includes the staff at transition houses.

There will be other women and children at the shelter. It can help just to talk with someone who has had a similar experience.

You can stay for up to six weeks. You don't have to pay for it. They will provide food, clothing, and other things you need. You will be expected to help with cooking and housework, and to abide by house rules.

You and your children may be given a private room, or you may have to share a room. A few houses have wheelchair accessible rooms and baths (see pages 118 to 119 for houses that are wheelchair accessible).

Some areas of the province do not have transition houses. Some communities have safe houses where women and children can go confidentially to find safety.

All transition houses have outreach programs and workers who will continue to assist you once you have left the house. If you decide not to go to a transition house to stay, they will still help you with information and referral services. (See the list of transition houses at the back of this book, or call the police, RCMP, or the transition house nearest you.)

ONCE YOU'VE LEFT, THEN WHAT?

Once you are safe, you can take some time to decide what to do next. You need the time and the space to make decisions that are best for you and your children.

Counsellors at the transition house can give you information and support that will help you make these decisions. If you don't go to a transition house, you can still call there for advice, assistance, or to talk about your options. These phone calls are confidential. You can call the 24-hour crisis line. You can arrange a visit. Some houses have workers who can meet you in your home or somewhere safe.

One of the first things you may need to do is to find out about your legal rights, how to get child support and child custody, and what to do if you don't have any money. This section provides some information about these issues.

LEGAL MATTERS

Getting Information

You can get some information about police procedures, the law, how the justice system works, and some legal matters from transition houses. The staff at the transition house can also help you get legal advice. You can ask them about this even if you have not stayed there.

Some RCMP and police offices have victim services, which provide emergency support to victims of family violence, as well as information about community resources and what to expect as the case proceeds through the justice system.

In addition, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice has Victim Services offices in four regions of the province, which serve all of Nova Scotia. Staff will answer questions about your case and the criminal justice process, keep you informed of court proceedings, and help you prepare to testify in court (see page 120).

If you want to find out more about the law, lawyers, and legal matters, call the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (1-800-665-9779 or 455-3135 in Halifax). Staff there can answer your questions and direct you to more information. You can also call Dial-a-Law (420-1888). You will get a tape recording giving basic legal information.

Don't sign any papers that might affect your legal rights until you talk with a lawyer.

If you don't have a lawyer, you can look in the Yellow Pages under Lawyers. The lawyers listed under Family Law may be most helpful to you. If you can, ask your friends or people you work with for names of good lawyers.

If you can't afford a lawyer, call Legal Aid (see pages 106 to 107). This agency may provide free legal services if you can't pay and if you qualify. Call right away, because Legal Aid can't work for both you and your abuser. If he calls first the lawyers there can't help you. They **can** provide a Legal Aid certificate, which you can take to another lawyer if you qualify for aid. You can also call the Legal Information Society's lawyer referral service.

Keeping the Children with You

If you have children and you want custody, apply for a custody order right away. You can do that yourself through Family Court, then contact a lawyer immediately.

You can get information on how to apply for a custody order from the Legal Information Society. Transition house outreach workers and court advocates can also provide information and will help you with the process whether you are a resident at a transition house or not. If there is a women's centre in your area, staff there may also be able to help you.

If you are afraid your partner may try to take the children to another country, you can ask the passport office to put the children's names on a security list so that you will be called if their father tries to get a passport for them. You must apply in person or by mail. You must provide ID for yourself, birth certificates for your children, court documents (such as custody orders, restraining orders, etc.), and a letter detailing why you want their names on the security list. The passport office usually keeps names on this list for 90 days only. After that you must reapply or provide related court documentation.

If your children have another nationality and you are concerned that your partner will try to take them to another country, contact the embassy or consulate and ask them to refuse to issue passports for your children. (Consulate and embassy phone numbers can be found in the government blue pages in the phone book, or online.)

If the Abuse Continues

Once you leave, his abusive behaviour may continue for a while or even get worse. He may try to control you financially, through the children, through the courts, through physical abuse, or by threatening and harassing you.

If this happens, he may be breaking the conditions of his release, or he could be charged with criminal harassment. Keep a written record of all contacts he makes and of what he does or says. Keep any written or recorded messages he leaves for you. Keep the police, his probation/parole officer (if he has one), and your lawyer informed about what is happening.

He may try to make you feel guilty or sorry for him. He may be very loving and generous, showering you with gifts and attention. He may try to scare you into returning. He may try to wear you down until you give up and return to him. He may use his parents, relatives, or friends to pressure you. One way to handle this is to have as little contact with him as possible. You may also apply for a peace bond.

Transition house staff, the police, his probation/parole officer (if he has been put on probation/parole), Victim Services, your lawyer, a counsellor, or a supportive friend can advise you and help you get through this period. Don't be afraid to ask for help. You don't deserve to be harassed. You deserve a better life.

If you are still afraid of him or he is threatening you, you can apply for a peace bond, if you don't have one yet.

Peace Bonds

A peace bond is a legal paper that a judge can order your abuser to sign. When he signs it, he may promise:

- not to harm or threaten you
- not to have any contact with you, either directly or through other people
- to stay away from your home or work
- not to obtain firearms or weapons
- not to contact the children except when allowed by the court, sometimes through a third party you both agree on

You can ask the judge to add any other conditions you feel are needed for your protection.

Applications for peace bonds should always be made to Provincial Court. Family Court will only hear a peace bond application if that court is already dealing with other related matters between you and your partner. You don't need a lawyer, but it can help to talk to one. Regional Victim Services Offices do provide assistance with peace bond applications in spousal/partner violence cases. Legal Aid may not help you get a peace bond.

In court, you will need details of when he hit or threatened you. You will have to convince the judge you have good reason to be afraid. Your partner will also be in the court room.

It can take one week (or longer) to get a peace bond. It lasts for up to one year. **You should know that a peace bond lists your address.** This is so the police can get to your home in an emergency. But it can also let your abuser know where you are. **Regional Victim Services can help you with the process of making arrangements to have your address remain confidential.**

What If He Breaks the Peace Bond?

If he breaks the peace bond, report it to the police so he can be arrested, fined, or put in jail. The police should respond immediately if he violates a “no contact” order, a peace bond, or a civil restraining order. If the police don’t lay charges, find out why. Regional Victim Services will also help you in this process.

Continue keeping a record of his abusive behaviour and save things like answering machine messages from him. Keep the peace bond with you at all times. Make copies and keep these at home or in a safe place. Inform others (neighbours, friends, landlord) about the peace bond.

Getting Professional Legal Advice

You may need professional legal advice if you decide not to go back to your partner right away. Lawyers can give you professional legal advice if you want to get a peace bond, custody of the children, or a divorce. Many women are scared or nervous about going to a lawyer, but it’s not a good idea to put it off. It helps to be prepared.

Things the lawyer will need:
- marriage certificate
- the lease, deed, or mortgage to your house
- your partner’s most recent pay stubs or income tax return
- your income tax return
- bank statements
- immigration papers/passport
- your record of his abusive actions towards you
- any court orders and notice of court applications

You pay a lawyer by the hour but, depending on the circumstances, you may be asked to pay a deposit (called a retainer). Bring a list of questions and as much information with you as you can. You may want to ask about going to court, about trials, about separation and divorce, about who has the right to the house and belongings. If you have children, ask about custody and child support (maintenance). Child support is what the children's father has to pay you for their care.

Here are some issues to discuss with the lawyer:
- legal fees
- custody and access to the children
- peace bonds
- what the judge will ask
- maintenance and child support
- can either you or he leave the province/country
- can either you or he take the children
- property rights
- what to expect in court

Know Your Rights

- Half of the money in your joint bank account is yours.
- If you are married or lived common law, half of his pension plan is yours (for the years you were married or lived together).
- Your personal belongings are yours to take with you. You may also take the children's belongings if they are with you.

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

Maybe you are expecting a cheque in the mail from your employer, from EI, Income Assistance, or child and family benefits. You can call those offices and ask them not to mail your cheque to your home address. Call as soon as you can.

You can get all your mail sent to a new address. The post office will re-address your mail for up to six months. It takes 5 to 10 days for the post office to start sending your mail to a new address. There is a fee for this service.

If you have your own money you may want to open your own bank account and arrange for your cheques to be deposited directly into your personal (not a joint) bank account. Then he cannot touch it.

Employment Support and Income Assistance

What if you don't have any money or you don't have enough?
If you leave your home and don't have enough money, you may qualify for assistance and employment supports from the Income Assistance Program (welfare). You may be embarrassed to apply for income assistance, but that's what these agencies are for. They are meant to help people through difficult times. You can think of it as a temporary situation, as a way to get out of an abusive relationship. You can think of it as a way to take more control over your life.

To apply for income assistance you can phone, write, or visit the local Department of Community Services' office and ask for an application form. A list of offices can be found on page 95 of this book. If you are told you can't have an application form, you can insist that you be given one.

When you apply you will be expected to:

- explain why you are applying
- give your name and address
- provide identification for you and your children (such as a Nova Scotia health card, social insurance card, passport, First Nations status card, etc.)
- provide all information related to any income or other money you receive (such as pay stubs, bank statements)
- show your housing expenses, such as lease, mortgage, power, fuel, and water bills (Note: If the mortgage is in both names, your partner may be required to pay for half.)

Under the Income Assistance Program, you may receive financial help right away for an emergency situation. For ongoing assistance you must participate in an assessment of your employment ability, which will help determine the supports you will require.

Nova Scotia Child Benefit

The Nova Scotia Child Benefit (NSCB) and National Child Benefit (NCB) replaced children's personal allowances from the Income Assistance Program several years ago. These benefits including the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) are administered in a separate cheque from Canada Revenue Agency. Eligibility for the NSCB is determined on net family income for the previous income tax year and the number of children in your family. In order to get the benefits your children are entitled to, you must inform the Canada Revenue Agency of any changes in your circumstances, such as address, marital status, income and the number of children.

Maximum monthly benefits including the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, National Child Benefit combined with the Canada Child Tax Benefit provide amounts ranging from $323.31 per month for one child to $1,564.98 per month for 5 children for the year 2010–2011. The maximum benefit is available for families with income up to $18, 000. Families whose net income is between $18,001 and $23,000 will receive partial benefits, under the Nova Scotia Child Benefit program.

Applying for assistance can be a frustrating process, but help is available to guide you through the system. It is also important to know that you can appeal any income assistance decision. Information is available from the Legal Information Society, your local income assistance office, or a local women's centre.

If you apply for income assistance and you have children, you will probably have to apply for child support/maintenance, because it is expected that the father of your children will help pay for their needs. Any maintenance payments you are entitled to will be counted as income against your income assistance payment.

Maintenance and Child Support

If you have your children with you, you are entitled to receive child support/maintenance from their father. You can apply for maintenance yourself through Family Court. Transition house staff can provide you with information and may be able to help you apply. The court will work out the amount of support to be paid. Support payments can also be determined in divorce proceedings. You may also wish to discuss this matter with a lawyer.

Various Programs to Help You Get Your Money

Once you get a maintenance order you should receive money for the children regularly (usually every month). When the maintenance order is in place, the court will automatically register it with the Maintenance Enforcement Program. The role of this program is to make sure you get maintenance.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program will register your file as a "caution" case if they are aware that you have been abused by your partner, if there are concerns for your safety, or if you have a peace bond in place. This means they will notify you when they contact him.

If he threatens you or tells you to withdraw from the program, let Maintenance Enforcement know. Staff will work with you to keep your income intact.

If you apply for income assistance, you must make every effort to get a maintenance order or maintenance agreement for yourself and/or the support of your children. If you do not have a maintenance order or if your maintenance/child support is believed to be too low, you may be referred to the Family Maintenance Income Support Program. They will work with you to get a fair and equitable payment. They may help you work out a voluntary agreement so you don't have to go to court.

If maintenance/child support payments are irregular or not being paid, you can sign an Assignment of Maintenance form. This will allow the Department of Community Services to collect your maintenance/child support money and issue you one cheque. It means that even if the order is in default or he doesn't pay regularly, you will get your money because your income assistance cheque will stay the same.

In some cases where there has been abuse, the Income Assistance Program may waive the requirement to pursue maintenance/child support. This may happen if there is evidence of increased risk of abuse for you or your children.

Federal Child Support Guidelines came into effect under the Divorce Act on May 1, 1997. If you got a divorce after this date the court will use these guidelines to calculate child support (maintenance). If you were divorced before May 1, 1997, the guidelines will be used to calculate child support if you apply for a change (also called a variance) in your maintenance order.

The way child support payments are taxed was also changed under the *Divorce Act.* The parent who receives child support payments will no longer pay tax on the payments, but the parent who pays child support will not be able to claim the money as a tax deduction. At the moment, these guidelines apply only to child maintenance orders made under the *Divorce Act.* However, the Nova Scotia government is expected to adopt similar guidelines for separated parents (married/common law).

For further information on how all of these changes might affect you, call the Legal Information Society at 1-800-665-9779 (455-3135 in the Halifax area), or call the local court.

FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE

Where can you go after the transition house, the motel, or your friend's house? In some communities you may be able to get low-cost housing. Call the nearest Housing Services office to find out about low-cost housing. Their offices are listed in the blue pages at the back of your phone book.

Some places also have "second stage housing" which is safe and affordable housing for abused women and their children. Usually you can stay for one year. Your local transition house can tell you more about second stage housing (see page 116 of this book).

Renting an Apartment

If you need to find an apartment, the newspaper is a good place to start looking. Check the classified ads for ideas of what to look for and how much rent may cost.

According to the law you cannot be refused an apartment because you have children. You can be refused if you have pets.

When you find an apartment, you may need to pay a damage deposit. A damage deposit is money you pay when you first rent a place. It is usually half a month's rent. **Under exceptional circumstances, Income Assistance may pay the damage deposit if the health and safety of the client/family are in question.** If the place is not damaged when you move out, you should get this money back.

You may also have to sign a lease. A lease is a contract saying that you are renting the place. It says how long you are renting for, how much you pay each month, and what services you and the landlord will be paying for. Make sure you understand your lease before you sign it. Make sure you get a copy.

WHAT DO I WANT IN AN APARTMENT?

When you call about an ad for an apartment, ask about the safety of the building, the cost, whether heat and lights are included, the deposit required, the amount of space, and the location and distance to schools.

Ask yourself these questions before you begin apartment hunting:

Safety
- What do you need to be safe from your abuser?
- Do you need to be on the third floor or higher?
- Do you need a security building?

Cost
- How much can you pay for rent?
- How much can you pay for heat and lights?
- Income assistance only allows a certain amount. Find out how much that is.

Space
- How many bedrooms do you need?
- How much space do you need?

Location
- How close do you need to be to work?
- Do you need to be close to schools?

Other Options

- Do you want to live alone or share an apartment?
- If you have children, would you like to share with another mother?

If You Own a House

Maybe you own a house, alone or with your partner. Or maybe he owns the house. If you are not married, whoever owns the house has full legal rights to it. Even if you don't own the house, you may also have some rights. Ask your lawyer. If you are married, you and your husband have equal legal rights to the house. Even if the house is in his name, he can't sell it without your consent, but get legal advice soon.

GETTING A JOB

When you're looking for a job you may feel discouraged, especially if you don't find one right away. There are some services and agencies to help you. A few of them are just for women (see page 91). They can help you find out things you need to know, such as:

- what skills you have
- what sort of work might suit you
- what sorts of jobs are out there
- what job training courses you might take

Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Sometimes people know of jobs you can apply for.

The Department of Community Services has a Career Planning Program, and some income assistance offices have Employment Support Services or Employment Resource Centres that may help you. Human Resources Development Canada also has resource

centres (formerly known as Employment Centres) that offer information and some employment support services.
Check the directory on pages 91 to 92 under Employment or check your local Human Resources Centre in the blue pages of the telephone book.

FINDING HELP FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN

You have been through a lot. You may have made a lot of changes in a short time. You may have a lot more changes to make. All of this can be very stressful.

All of these challenges may make leaving an abusive relationship even more difficult for you and for your children. There are some support services to help you, many of which you can access for free.

Agencies, such as single parent and family resource centres, Mi'kmaq Family Treatment Centres, and women's centres offer programs for women and children. If not, they may refer you to an agency that will provide these services (see directory).

Transition houses also have programs for you and for your children. The staff are skilled in helping women and children who have been in abusive situations.

Getting Counselling

Maybe you feel afraid or confused. Perhaps you feel hurt, guilty, worried, or angry. Maybe you feel like a failure or like you are sick. Whatever you are feeling, you might want to talk about it with a professional counsellor. Counsellors are trained to help you sort things out. They are there to listen.

Some groups offer counselling. They are listed at the back of this book. Some services are free, though it may take a while to get in to see someone. If police are involved or charges have been laid, you may qualify for payment of counselling costs through the Criminal Injuries Counselling Program. Contact Regional Victim Services Offices for more information. Getting counselling can sometimes be hard, but you can get some counselling at a transition house. Or the staff may help you find a counsellor. If you are not happy with the first counsellor you go to, try someone else.

Maybe you feel that you aren't tough enough to handle things yourself. Remember that you don't have to prove anything to anyone. You have survived things that a lot of people might not have, and you've taken some really difficult steps to make things better.

It takes courage to see when it's time to reach out and get help. You do deserve to be happy and you need to take care of yourself. You need to be able to count on yourself for the next while.

Help for the Children

Your children are probably confused, scared, and angry. They may need help dealing with all of it. Children need to know that:

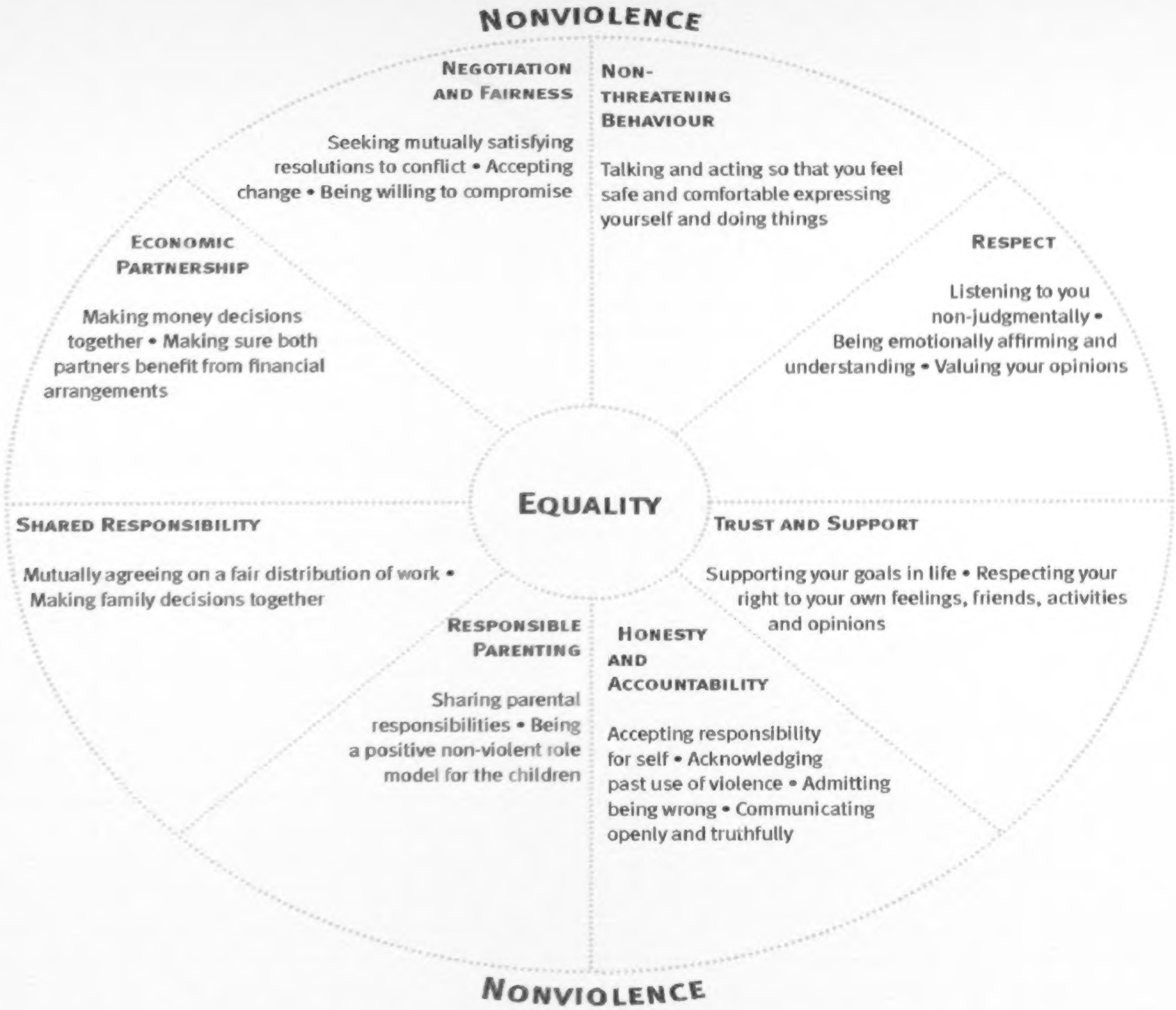
- they are safe and will stay safe
- it was not their fault
- you love them
- it's all right to feel whatever they are feeling
- it's okay to talk about it
- they will be listened to and understood if they talk about it

Children may need to know it's still okay to love or miss their father, but they also need to understand that his abusive behaviour is not acceptable. They need to know that you are all right even if you cry and get upset. Children need to know about what is happening.

Your children may need to blame someone. They may see you as the one to blame, because you are the one who left. Perhaps they often saw your abuser blame you for things, so they do the same. But remember, your children show their anger and fear to you because they trust you.

If your children blame you, that may be really hard for you, but be patient with them. Try to help them see why you are doing what you are doing. It may help to let them know you are afraid, too.

You may want to consider getting counselling for your children. Remember, getting counselling for them does not mean you have failed in any way. Your children have been through a lot. It's only normal that they might need some help.



NONVIOLENCE

EQUALITY

NEGOTIATION AND FAIRNESS

Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict • Accepting change • Being willing to compromise

NON-THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

Talking and acting so that you feel safe and comfortable expressing yourself and doing things

RESPECT

Listening to you non-judgmentally • Being emotionally affirming and understanding • Valuing your opinions

TRUST AND SUPPORT

Supporting your goals in life • Respecting your right to your own feelings, friends, activities and opinions

HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accepting responsibility for self • Acknowledging past use of violence • Admitting being wrong • Communicating openly and truthfully

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING

Sharing parental responsibilities • Being a positive non-violent role model for the children

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work • Making family decisions together

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Making money decisions together • Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements

NONVIOLENCE

Adapted from the "Duluth Model Equality Wheel" developed by the Domestic Violence Intervention Program, Duluth, Minnesota: theduluthmodel.org/pdf/Equality.pdf

BEFORE YOU CONSIDER GOING BACK

At some point, you may think about going back. If so, you may want to talk it over with someone first. Perhaps you could try some personal counselling.

Before you decide, take a moment to ask yourself what you need from a healthy relationship. If he's been getting some help to change his behaviour, ask yourself how far he has moved towards equality. You may want to make a list or compare your thoughts with the equality wheel on page 66.

Can Programs for Abusive Men Help?

Sometimes the court will require an abusive man to enter a program to help him change his behaviour. In Nova Scotia there are provincially funded programs for abusive men (see page 197 for men's programs).

Some men benefit from these programs, some do not. If counselling does help it is only because he wants to change. First he has to admit he has a problem. Then he has to want to work on changing his behaviour. How much he changes, and how he changes, may depend on his reasons for getting help.

With counselling he may stop being abusive, or he may just change the way he is abusive. Some men stop the physical violence, but they get more emotionally or verbally abusive. Some men don't change at all. There is no guarantee or quick fix. It is important that his counselling focuses on his abusive behaviour and on him taking responsibility to change.

He may quit the program or stop the counselling if you move back with him, or if it's no longer required by the court. He may tell you what he thinks you want to hear. You are the best judge of what is right for you. You should not feel pressured to give him any guarantees. Only you can decide if the abuse has stopped.

What about Counselling or Mediation?

If you haven't left him or you're thinking of going back, someone may suggest couple counselling or marriage counselling. This may be helpful, or it may be unsafe for you and not helpful.

Any counsellor you choose must have a good understanding of issues related to women who are abused, and about power and control. In a counselling process it is important that you are able to speak openly and honestly about your situation. If your partner's behaviour or actions keep you from telling the counsellor about his abuse then the counselling will not be helpful.

Separate counselling for each of you is probably a better idea. His violence is his responsibility, not yours. Your responsibility is to learn more about what his abuse has done to you, to learn to respect yourself, and to be happy.

Mediation is a process where two people come to a shared agreement with the aid of a neutral third party, known as a mediator. It is sometimes used to settle differences or when couples are separating or getting a divorce. **But it is important to stress that mediation is not a good choice when there has been abuse in the relationship,** when there are threats, coercion, a pattern of control and manipulation, or any safety risks. Mediation should not be considered unless you believe it is a safe option. Court staff should be informed about abuse in your relationship.

SUMMARY

Whatever you decide to do, please remember …

No one has the right to hit you. No one has the right to hurt you in any way, or to make you live in fear. You do not deserve to be abused. You have the right to feel safe in a relationship. You have the right to be treated with respect.

Whatever you decide to do, your own safety and your children's safety should come first. Remember, you are not alone. There are people who care and there are people who can help. There are places you can go. There are ways to get money and jobs. Remember: you can make changes, and there are people who are willing to help. Only you have the power to decide, but we hope that the information in this book will help you along the way.

If you've already left, you may feel ready to take the first step towards healing, towards a new life, or even start a new relationship. **Remember, your dreams are what your future is made of.**

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF ABUSED WOMEN

Has a friend or relative told you she is being abused by her partner? Do you suspect this is happening? Watch for these signs of abuse:

Signs of violent behaviour
You may notice injuries, broken furniture and ornaments, or holes in the walls.

Signs of emotional abuse
You may suspect that he is threatening her, making her feel stupid, or attacking her self-esteem.

Changes in behaviour
You may suspect that she is isolating herself from you and others. Does she refuse to see you or others until she has asked his permission? Has she become more unpredictable, telling you some days how wonderful her partner is, others how awful? Does she seem depressed? Is she questioning her own sanity?

Changes in children's behaviour
You may have noticed that the children have become clingy and fearful, or aggressive and angry. Children are often aware of abuse, even when they do not witness it, and are psychologically harmed. They may also be physically hurt. If you suspect child abuse, you have a legal duty to report it. See page 91 of this book for information.

If you are unsure if what is happening to your friend or relative is abuse, read the information about abuse beginning on page 2.

DEAL WITH YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEARS

You may dismiss your fears. You know this woman. She's strong and wouldn't put up with any abuse. Sometimes you may find her behaviour so odd that you think it's not surprising her partner is angry with her. Your friend or relative may have told you that the abuse is her fault, that she deserved it. Remember: no one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do. Men who abuse usually believe, or try to make others believe, that the abuse was the victim's fault. "She drove me to it" is a common excuse. No one is responsible for another person's behaviour. Men who abuse usually control their anger and choose their victims. They may be angry, but they rarely lash out with fists or belittling words at their friends or team-mates or their work colleagues.

You may think she is exaggerating or doubt your suspicions because you know her partner is a nice man; you've never even seen him get angry. The fact is that when women hint about problems at home, it is more than likely that they are minimizing the situation, or blaming themselves. The abuse may not seem all that serious to you, but women whose partners physically abuse them or belittle and control them often suffer greatly from the abuse. Their self-esteem can be eroded to a point where they are incapable of protecting themselves and have serious health problems. They may be unable to sleep or concentrate. Many women say that emotional abuse is as painful as the physical abuse.

Even if your friend is not showing any outward signs of feeling helpless, she may be desperate. Abusive men often control their partners by isolating them. Telling someone about the abuse breaks her isolation, but if her partner knows about it, he may feel threatened. He may monitor her telephone calls or insist that she not see her family or friends.

You may think it can't be serious because she stays with him. Read pages 26 to 27 so that you know why women stay with abusive partners and how difficult it is for them to make changes. Many women who are being abused live with a terrible conflict: they hate the abuse, but they love their partners. Often he is the most significant person in her life, the one with whom she dreamed of having a happy, loving future. She will hope that the abuse will stop and they can be a happy family.

Women want loving, caring partners. Even abusive men can be loving and caring at times. After a violent episode, the man may take special care to show his good side. This is often manipulative: he wants her to believe it won't happen again so that he can keep power and control over her. Their partner's signs of love often reinforce the woman's mistaken belief that she is the cause of the abuse. She gets caught up in a spiral of self-blame that shifts the responsibility for change from him to her. This pattern is common in abuse. For further understanding of this, read Is There a Pattern to Abuse? on page 17.

Women may not leave because they do not know of any place they can go, because they have no money, or because they are afraid of disrupting their children's lives. Some women do not leave because they believe he will harm her or her children. This fear is justified: most women who are killed by their partners are in the process of leaving them.

PREPARE YOURSELF BEFORE YOU OFFER SUPPORT

Learn about woman abuse. This book is a good start. Know that you are not alone. Learn about the legal options and the many ways you can help your friend or relative to get help.

Examine your own beliefs. We all have our own understanding of domestic violence. If you need to talk to someone, call the crisis line at a shelter near you. The line is open 24/7. If you are trying to support an abused friend or relative, the counsellors will welcome your call. You do not have to share your identity.

Learn what services are available for women in abusive situations, so that you can encourage her to seek help. Some professionals will have more experience dealing with abusive relationships than others. If she encounters someone who is not helpful, encourage her to try again.

Know that you are not responsible for her choices. It is her choice whether she stays or leaves. Telling her to leave does not help. Don't take any credit and don't take any blame for her decisions and her actions.

Realize that you cannot fix the problem. Once abuse starts, it does not stop until the abuser takes responsibility for his actions and makes drastic changes. Until this happens, she is not safe. You cannot fix the reason for the abuse. You cannot stop the alcohol and drug use that may trigger the violence.

Remember that you are not a trained counsellor. Counselling women who have experienced abuse requires skills that most of us do not have. Counselling their children is equally sensitive. You may do damage by trying to counsel your friend or relative. Seek professional help.

Decide if you can handle the role of support person. Know that you have a choice. Think about whether you can stay in control of what you do and say. Ask yourself what the greatest challenge to supporting your friend or relative will be. Think through whether you are in a position to make a commitment to your friend or relative. Being a support is not easy. It may take a long time to see improvements.

The DOs: Ways to offer support

Support has many levels. Offering support could be as simple as identifying your suspicions and concerns to your friend and providing the number of the transition house outreach line and let her know that she can call anonymously to discuss the situation. The most important thing you can do is be a good listener.

Let her know you are there for her

Asking someone if they are being abused can be very uncomfortable for you both, but it need not be complicated. Often it takes no more than asking "Do you need to talk?" or making a statement about yourself, such as "I've been worried about you" to open a dialogue.

That's all it took for Sally:

> Sally often had bruises, cuts, and other injuries. She always had a story about a fall on the ski slopes, or a car accident, or tripping over the dog, and laughed about how accident prone she was. One summer, while Sally was visiting her brother Rob, she was in such pain that she called the hospital to ask for advice. Rob walked past and, embarrassed, she quickly covered her mouth so he couldn't hear the conversation. When she got off the phone, he came over and said to her, "Sally, if you ever need help, just

> ask me." This was the first time anyone had shown a sign that they would be willing to help. Tears filled Sally's eyes, and Rob said, "Why don't we talk?" She sat down and told him about the 15 years of abuse she had endured.

Women usually have reasons for what they do, but may not be able to tell you them clearly. You may find it difficult to know how to respond to vague statements like, "I'm not sure what to make of him," or, "He makes me nervous sometimes." Try asking her questions to get more information, such as, "What does he do that makes you say that?" or, "What does he do that makes you nervous?"

When you get a response, repeat back to her what she says. This is called mirroring. For example, if she says, "I'm thinking of leaving him," you could respond, "So, you're thinking of leaving?" This shows you are listening and gives her the chance to talk more about it.

A good communication rule is to always speak for yourself and use "I" Statements. For example, instead of saying, "You make me feel uncomfortable when you ..." try saying, "I feel uncomfortable when you ...". In general, "I" statements are less blaming.

If you are unsure what your friend wants from you, ask.

Be a good listener

Being a listener can be emotionally demanding. Details about abuse are often painful. You have to be balanced and stable yourself, and able to handle your friend's stories and her emotional turmoil without reacting inappropriately. Your job is to be there for her, to listen, to be a friend and support. You are her island in the storm: someone safe and stable she can talk to, express doubts and fears to, and try out ideas on.

Your friend will probably minimize the abuse or think it is her fault. By listening, you can help her identify more clearly what is happening and the impact it is having on her and her children. You can affirm that it is not her fault and that the abuse is not acceptable. You can reassure her that the abuse doesn't say anything about who she is. She is experiencing abuse, but that is not who she is. She is far more than an abused or victimized woman.

Encourage her

She can take care of herself and make her own decisions, but being abused by a partner is devastating. She needs your compassion and your encouragement to find her own strength.

Be patient

Patience is essential when supporting a woman who is being abused. Actions like leaving an abusive partner are a process, not a single act. Often it takes months, or even years. Your friend or relative may talk for a very long time before she acts.

One woman said:

> My friend Judith came to me almost every day. She talked and cried, talked and cried. Every day she would tell me she couldn't cope any longer, that she had to do something, had to leave, but then she'd give yet more reasons why she couldn't. I began to resent her visits. I was busy and didn't have time to sit and listen to someone who talked endlessly but didn't do anything. In frustration, I told another friend about it, and she said, "But she is doing something. She's processing. She's working through her fears and is shoring up her courage. You are doing something too. You are helping her process by listening."

Eventually, with your support, she may accept that he is the one who has to make changes. She may leave him. But chances are she will return. Some women return many times before they can make the final break.

Do you have the patience for this task?

> Sally's brother had to decide if he was willing to spend the time supporting Sally. He knew her husband could be very violent and he may be risking his own safety. Rob gave the matter a lot of thought and finally made the decision to do what he could. He and his wife helped Sally find an apartment and went to second-hand stores with her to furnish it. They supported her through court cases and called the police when her husband showed up at the workplace. This often came at inconvenient times, and sometimes Rob found himself getting annoyed with Sally. He was frustrated that she'd ever let herself get into this situation, and that she had stayed in it so long. Sometimes he was exhausted and regretted his decision to help. He kept his thoughts to himself though, and eventually Sally was settled and safe, and he knew that he'd been a good brother.

Help her make a safety plan, whether she uses it or not

She should have a planned escape route, know where she would go in an emergency, and how she would get there. She should have safety money hidden away. See pages 36 to 38 for more information. A workbook on safety plans is available from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice Policing and Victim Services and from transition houses (see page 120).

Encourage her to call police if she is being threatened or hurt
Officers are trained to handle domestic violence cases and have procedures they must follow. Some departments have Victim Support Units. You could help your friend by finding out what will happen if she or a neighbour calls the police. See pages 42 to 43 of this book. Ask at local women's shelters. Contact the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Policing and Victim Services Division, for a brochure that outlines the criminal justice process for victims and a court preparation guide for victims who are called to testify in court.

Go with her to appointments
Talking to doctors, church leaders, police, and lawyers can be a scary experience. So can attending court. Offer to go with her.

Help her find a safe place to live
Think carefully before you offer your home. Having an abused woman and her children live with you can be extremely stressful. She will be under great stress. Her life and her children's lives will be severely disrupted. Your family life will be disrupted. If it doesn't work out, it will mean another move for them and further conflict. Consider all the options. Help her to meet with counsellors at a local shelter before deciding where to go.

Be clear about what you offer
Sometimes, when we are desperate to help someone move from a dreadful situation, we try to make bargains. We tell them that if they leave, we will be there to help them find a new home, or even offer our own homes as refuge. Before doing that, make sure you set clear boundaries. If offering your home, discuss how long she can stay, who is responsible for the housework, and what you will do if her partner shows up.

Be aware of her needs

Although patterns of domestic violence are similar for women all over the world, your friend or relative may have specific needs. She may have experienced racism or have felt excluded and isolated in the past. This may make her reluctant to seek support. Be aware that your friend or relative may need extra help to be heard and understood if any of the following apply:

She lives in a rural area

If your friend lives in a rural area, she may have difficulty accessing services. There may not be any services in her community, or may not want to access them for confidentiality reasons. You may be able to help her find child care, locate a suitable support. You may be able to provide transportation for her to see her doctor or go to the shelter. If she sees a service provider in a larger urban area, try to make sure service providers understand the difficulties rural women face.

She has a disability

If your friend has a disability, she will need to see service providers who understand her needs. Read pages 9 to 10 to better understand how you can help.

She has a distinct culture

Acadian and other Francophone women, African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, and immigrant women require cultural appropriate counselling. Wherever possible, if your friend or relative so desires, try to help her find support from someone she is comfortable with.

Read pages 8 to 11 to better understand how you can help.

She has a lesbian partner

This book focuses on women who are abused by their male partners. However, if your friend is abused by a lesbian partner, many of the same dynamics apply.

She is over 65

For some senior women, the abuse has been happening for a long time and they only recently sought help. For others, the abuse started with a new relationship. It is often particularly embarrassing for an older woman to seek help and she may need extra support to recognize that it is not she who should be ashamed. To learn more about elder abuse read pages 12 to 13, or go to www.gov.ns.ca/seniors/pub/2005_ElderAbuseStrategy.pdf and www.cnpea.ca.

English is not her first language

If English is not your friend or relative's first language, she may want you to help her find a service provider who speaks her language. Even if she can speak English, stress, urgency, or nervousness can prevent her from finding the words to express herself in another language and can create major misunderstandings relating to her safety and security. Some women who decide to use safe houses not only have to leave their community, friends and acquaintances who are often their only support system, but their children sometimes may need to move to a new school which interrupts their integration process if they are newcomers to Canada. These additional worries can dissuade women from getting the help they need.

She's being exploited

Some incidents of domestic violence, if explored further, can actually be an exploitative and criminal relationship between a trafficker and a victim. This occurs when the male partner staged the relationship to groom her to be exploited in the sex trade. She may really believe that there is a dating or intimate relationship between them, but the abuse she experiences includes her exploitation for his financial gain. If you believe this to be the case, ensure your own safety before getting involved. It is best to contact the police or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, as they would know how best to proceed. For more information about this type of abuse, see page 25 of this publication.

The DON'Ts: Things not to do when offering support

Don't try to rescue her or change him

You cannot rescue her, change him, or fix the problem. You may think you know what is best for her and the children, but it is up to her to decide for herself what she wants to do.

Don't blame her

Many abused women say that their friends or relatives offered practical support, but it came with blaming messages that made them feel worse.

Don't say, "I told you so."

If you are a parent or a sibling, you may have predicted that this relationship would be destructive. Resist the urge to say, "I knew this would happen." No one wants to hear that. Women often stay in abusive relationships longer than is necessary because they feel that they can't go home for this reason.

Don't make judgmental statements

Many abused women say that they didn't tell someone about the abuse because they heard that person make statements such as, "I think some women like being controlled by a strong man," or, "No man would ever get away with abusing me!"

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Be aware that your friend or relative's abuse may trigger memories of your own. If this happens, you should consider helping her find support from someone else.

> A church lay-counsellor was listening to a woman talking about the abuse she was suffering at home. The counsellor felt herself getting angry as the woman talked. Later she identified the cause of her anger. The woman's story was triggering the counsellor's childhood memories of the abuse her mother had experienced. She remembered how helpless she had felt as a child and how angry she had been at her mother for being a victim. The counsellor immediately withdrew from counselling and began seeing a therapist to work through her feelings.

Find a support person yourself. Find someone you can talk this through with, but be careful not to betray your friend or relative's confidences.

Prepare yourself for contact from the abuser. When her partner knows you are supporting her, he may approach you. He may be angry and potentially dangerous, especially if their relationship has become exploitative. He may try to manipulate you by complaining about your friend or relative. He may try to set you against her by telling you she's lying or exaggerating, to remove you as her ally. If he admits to abuse, he may minimize it and tell you it has stopped. Be prepared for any of these things. If he threatens you in any way, call the police.

Don't take your friend or relative's behaviour personally. Many abused women put up barriers and isolate themselves or become emotionally distressed. You may have noticed that your friend or relative has become more distant and less trusting. On some days she may seem close and on others, more remote. This is common. When women are abused, their relationships with others often change. She may criticize you or pick an argument over something you think is very small. She may put up a wall and reject you. Remember, your job is to listen, not to judge or change her.

In the end, you will probably see where you could have done things differently. What you need to know is not that her life changed, but that you were as good a friend and support to her as you could be. Above all, be kind to yourself.

Content is constantly being updated. For the most recent edition visit our website **www.women.gov.ns.ca** *and follow the links to our publications on violence.*

ADDITIONAL READING

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Brewster, Susan. *Helping Her Get Free: A Guide for Families and Friends of Abused Women.* SealPress, 2006.

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Government of Canada: Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (2010). *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Threat Assessment.*

International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy. (2010). *An Exploration of Promising Practices in Response to Human Trafficking in Canada.*

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Weiss, Elaine. *Family and Friends' Guide to Domestic Violence: How to Listen, Talk and Take Action When Someone You Care About is Being Abused.* Volcano Press, 2003.

West, Carolyn M. *Violence in the Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black, and Blue.* The Haworth Press Inc., 2002.

Yakushko, Oksana. (2009). *Human Trafficking: A Review for Mental Health Professionals.* International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling 31, pp. 158-167.

WEBSITES

women.gov.ns.ca/trafficking
The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women website that provides information about the issue of human trafficking, including a link to the electronic asset-map of available support services for victims.

nsdomesticviolence.ca/resource-map/type/Human-Trafficking-Assets-Map
The electronic asset-map of available support services for victims of human trafficking in Nova Scotia.

ccrweb.ca/en/trafficking-resources
The Canadian Council for Refugees' online database of human trafficking resources that provides access to tools for raising awareness about trafficking, and for providing services to trafficked persons across Canada.

rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/index-eng.htm
The website is the RCMP's Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre.

cyberbullying.novascotia.ca
The Government of Nova Scotia's Cyberbullying Task Force website.

legalinfo.org
The website of the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia provides information about the law in this province.

phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/index-eng.php
The Public Health Agency of Canada operates the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV). The NCFV is Canada's

resource centre for information on violence within relationships of kinship, intimacy, dependency or trust. Information is available in both English and French.

thans.ca/Content/FindShelter
The Transition House Association of Nova Scotia member organizations provide crisis and transitional services to women and their children. You can locate a shelter and other resources through this site.

hotpeachpages.net/index.html
International inventory of hotlines, shelters, refuges, crisis centres and women's organizations, searchable by country, plus index of domestic violence resources in over 70 languages.

shelternet.ca/splashPage.htm
Shelternet provides information about transition houses in all parts of Canada, and includes much useful information about safety planning, as well as a site for children.

lfcc.on.ca/best_evidence_CEV.html
Information for best practices to help children exposed to violence.

neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca
Neighbours, Friends and Families is a public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to an at-risk woman or an abusive man can help.

women.gov.ns.ca/immigrant-women
Living in Nova Scotia: A Guide for Immigrant Women is an online guide for women who have moved to Nova Scotia from other countries. In these pages, you will find information to help you settle into your new life in Canada. Choose from any of the boxes below to learn more about the specific topic. We also have a general Resources section filled with additional links.

DIRECTORY OF AGENCIES AND SERVICES

The programs and services listed in this directory are important to all Nova Scotians but especially to women and children who experience violence. We encourage you to use them and ask our governments to make sure they are maintained, and if possible, improved.

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Child Benefits

Nova Scotia Child Benefit, Toll-free 1-800-387-1193

Child Care Information and Subsidies

Child Care Connections-NS
1200 Tower Rd., Suite 100, Halifax, 423-8199, Toll-free 1-800-565-8199

Day Care Subsidy Program

2131 Gottingen, 5th Floor, Halifax, 424-6679

Child Protection, Children's Aid Societies, Family and Children's Services

Call 1-877-424-1177 if you believe a child is in immediate danger.
From 4:30 PM to 8:30 AM weekdays, on weekends or on holidays,
call 1-866-922-2434

Annapolis County 532-2337
Antigonish 863-3213
Cape Breton Victoria County 563-3400
Colchester County 893-5950
Cole Harbour 435-7472
Cumberland County 667-3336
Dartmouth 424-3298
Digby 245-5811
Guysborough 533-4007
Halifax 425-5420
Hants County 798-2289
Inverness/Richmond 625-0660
Kings County 678-6176
Lunenburg County 543-4554

North Sydney 794-5110
Pictou County 755-5950
Queens County 354-3525
Sackville 869-3600
Shelburne County 637-2337
Shubenacadie 758-3553, Toll-free 1-800-263-8686
Yarmouth County 742-0700

Children with Special Needs

Progress Centre for Early Intervention
3530 Novalea Drive, Halifax, 423-2686
Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Counselling Services for Children

IWK Community Mental Health
Intake 464-4110, Clinic 422-1611

COUNSELLING

Most transition houses offer counselling for women and children or they can tell you about other good places to get counselling. You may also be eligible for counselling through Victim Services (see Victim Services). The Family Service Association and Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia, listed below, also offer counselling and have a sliding fee scale.

Family Service Association

Halifax and Lower Sackville: Central intake 420-1980
Toll-free 1-888-886-5552

Family Services of Eastern Nova Scotia

Sydney (head office) 539-6868
Toll-free 1-866-330-5952

Other Counselling Services

Criminal Injuries Counselling Program
Phone 424-4651, Toll-free 1-888-470-0773

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Outreach Agencies

Ann Terry Outreach Project, Sydney, 539-0404
Watershed Association Development Enterprises (W.A.D.E), Dartmouth, 435-4648
Women's Employment Outreach (W.E.O.), Halifax, 422-8023

Service Canada Centres (HRDC)

Service Canada Centres have access to Career Resource Centres that provide information to help you find employment now or to decide on a career for the future. Visit the website **http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca** or call your local Service Canada office.

Amherst Service Area, 661-6619
Antigonish Service Area, 863-7069
Bedford Service Area, 426-7698
Bridgewater Service Area, 527-5524
Clare Service Area, 742-6178
Dartmouth Service Area, 426-5512
Digby Service Area, 1-800-622-6232
Glace Bay Service Area, 842-2414
Guysborough Service Area, 1-800-622-6232
Halifax Service Area, 426-9617
Inverness Service Area, 258-2301
Kentville Service Area, 679-5772
New Glasgow Service Area, 755-7826

North Sydney Service Area, 794-5715
Port Hawkesbury Service Area, 625-4115
Sheet Harbour Service Area, 426-5512
Shelburne Service Area, 1-800-622-6232
Sydney Service Area, 564-2570
Truro Service Area, 893-0016
Windsor Service Area, 1-800-622-6232
Yarmouth Service Area, 1-800-622-6232

Service Canada Community Office

Service Canada Community Offices are managed through a contract for services or a collaborative arrangement with a community service provider or other non-Government of Canada organization. Community offices are mandated to provide services on behalf of Service Canada.

Cheticamp Service Canada Community Office, 224-4207
Petit de Grat Service Canada Community Office, 226-3803
Port Hood Service Canada Community Office, 787-2568
St. Peter's Service Canada Community Office, 535-3016
Whycocomagh Service Canada Community Office, 756-2901

Scheduled Outreach Site

Scheduled Outreach Sites provide services tailored to the needs of the community (mainly information and transaction support). These locations may also be within urban areas to serve targeted groups. Service Canada staff will travel to pre-determined locations on a regular basis (i.e. one day per week).

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

This is currently known as income assistance, though it may also be referred to as social assistance or welfare.

Department of Community Services

Central Regional Office
2131 Gottingen St., Halifax, Phone 424-5074

Central Region District Offices
Halifax: 2131 Gottingen St., 424-4150
Cole Harbour: 51 Forrest Hills Parkway, 435-7472
Dartmouth: 277 Pleasant St., Suite 400, 424-3298
Lakeside: 1492 St. Margaret's Bay Rd., 876-0580
Portland: 44 Portland St., 4th Fl., Royal Bank Building, Dartmouth, 424-1600
Sackville: 40 Freer Lane, Suite 3400, 869-3600
Sheet Harbour: 22756, Hwy. #7, The Bluewater Building, 885-2974

Eastern Regional Office
360 Prince St., Suite 25, Provincial Building, Sydney, 563-3302

Eastern Region District Offices
Glace Bay: 633 Main St., Senator's Place, 2nd Fl., 842-4000
North Sydney: 184 Commercial St., Parsons Bldg., 794-5110
Port Hawkesbury: MacSween St., Provincial Bldg., Unit #3, 625-0660
Sydney: 360 Prince St., Provincial Bldg., 563-3300

Northern Regional Office
161 Terra Cotta Dr., New Glasgow, 755-7023

Northern Region District Offices

Antigonish: 229 Main St.. 863-3213
Colchester: 60 Lorne St., Truro, 893-5950
Cumberland: 26-28 Prince Arthur St., Suite 201, Amherst, 667-3336
Guysborough: Chedabucto Mall, 533-4007
New Glasgow: 161 Terra Cotta Dr., 755-7363

Western Regional Office

10 Webster St., Suite 202, Kentville, 679-6715

Western Region District Offices

Annapolis: 5495 Granville Rd., Granville Ferry, 532-2337
Digby: 84 Warwick St. All Service Canada services come out of the same address
East Hants: 15 Commerce Court, Ste. 130, Elmsdale, Toll-free: 866-798-8319
Hants: 80 Water St., Windsor, 798-8319
Kings: 76 River St., Kentville, 678-6176
Lunenburg: 99 High St., Provincial Building, Suite 105, Bridgewater, 543-5527
Queens: 123 Henry Hensey Dr., Liverpool, 354-2771
Shelburne: Hwy. #3, Barrington, 637-2335
Yarmouth: 10 Starrs Rd., 742-0741

FAMILY COURTS

Justice Centres and Family Division of the Supreme Court

Amherst Justice Centre and Family Court Office: 16 Church St., 667-2256
Antigonish: Justice Centre and Family Court Office, 11 James St., 863-7312
Bridgewater: Justice Centre and Family Court Offices, 141 High St., 543-4679

Digby/Annapolis: Justice Centre, 119 Queen St., 425-4567
Halifax: Supreme Court (Family Division), 3380 Devonshire Ave., 424-3990
Kentville: Justice Centre and Family Court Office, 136 Exhibition St., 679-6075
Pictou: Family Court Office, 69 Water St., 485-7025
Port Hawkesbury: Supreme Court (Family Division), 15 Kennedy St., 625-4012/3
Sydney: Supreme Court (Family Division), 136 Charlotte St., Ste. 1 and 2, 563-2200
Truro: Justice Centre, 540 Prince St., 893-5840;
Family Court Office, 542 Prince St., 893-5840
Yarmouth: Justice Centre, 164 Main St., 742-0500;
Family Division, 742-0550

FAMILY RESOURCE, SUPPORT, AND SINGLE PARENT CENTRES

Amherst: Maggie's Place., 667-7250
Antigonish: Kids First Family Resource Centre, 863-3848
Lawrencetown: Family Matters – The Annapolis County Family Resource Centre, 1-800-399-7119
Bridgewater: Family Support Centre, 543-1301
Canning: Kids Action Program, 582-1375
Cape Breton: Family Place Resource Centre, 562-5616
Chester: Chester and Area Family Resource Centre, 275-4347
Digby: Digby County Family Resource Centre, 245-6464
East Preston: East Preston Daycare Family Health Resource Centre, 462-7266
Greenwood: Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre, 765-5611
Guysborough: Kids First Family Resource Centre, Toll-free: 1-888-533-3881
Pictou County Kids First, 755-5437

Halifax Regional Municipality

Bayers/Westwood Family Support Resource Centre, 454-9444
Dartmouth Family Resource Centre, 464-8234
Family SOS, 455-5515
Home of the Guardian Angel, Single Parent Centre, 479-3031; Adoption Services, 422-7964
Memory Lane Family Place, 864-6363
Military Family Resource Centre, CFB Halifax, 427-7788
Military Family Resource Centre, CFB Shearwater, 720-1885
Mulgrave Park Tenants Association, 453-9273
PACT: Parent and Child Together, 434-8952
Parent 'n Tot Meeting Place, 443-9569
Parent Research Centre, 492-0133
Single Parent Centre, 479-3031
Inverness County: Family Place Resource Centre Outreach Office, 258-3002
Kennetcook: Kids Action Program, 632-2442
Kentville: Annapolis Valley Hants CAPC, 582-1375
Kings County Family Support Centre, 678-5760
Liverpool: Queens Family Resource Centre, 354-7176
Middle Musquodoboit: Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre, 384-2794
Musquodoboit Harbour: Eastern Shore Family Resource Association, 827-1461
New Ross: Family Resource Centre, 689-2414
New Waterford: Family Resource Centre, 862-7140
Pictou County: Kids First Family Resource Centre, 755-5437
Saulnierville: Le Centre provincial de ressources prescolaires, 769-5850
Shelburne: Kings Street Centre., 875-3256
Truro: Maggie's Place, 895-0200
Victoria County, 336-2444
Windsor: Family Resource Centre of West Hants, 798-5961
Yarmouth: Parent's Place., 749-1718

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

Federal, provincial, and municipal governments list some numbers in the blue pages at the back of your telephone book. Look first in the index at the beginning of the blue pages. If you cannot find a number for the federal, provincial, or municipal service you want, a good place to start is Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Federal Government

Information line, 1-800-622-6232
TTY/TDD, 1-800-926-9105

Provincial Government

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Phone 424-8662, Toll-free 1-800-565-8662

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
Phone 424-4111, Toll-free 1-877-269-7699

Nova Scotia Ombudsman's Office
Phone 424-6780, Toll-free 1-800-670-1111

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (inquiries about government programs and services), 1-800-670-4357

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Telephone: 902.424.5230
Toll Free in Nova Scotia: 1.877.292.9597
Email: nsnp@gov.ns.ca
novascotiaimmigration.ca

HEALTH

Addiction/Drug Dependency Services

Choices Adolescent Program: Halifax, **491-2401**
Marguerite Centre, **876-0006**
Matrix Women's Services: Halifax, **424-5920**(Intake)
Regional Offices:
Dartmouth/Halifax, **424-5623**
Pictou, **485-4335**
Sydney, **563-2050**
Yarmouth, **742-2406**

General Health Services

Well woman clinics operate on an occasional basis in many communities. Check with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women listed on page 95 or phone your nearest hospital for more information.

Health Link, dial **811**

Halifax Regional Municipality

IWK Health Centre, **470-8888**
North End Community Health Centre, **420-0303**
Public Health Services: HRM, **481-5800**

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS IN COMMUNITIES

Province-wide

Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia (SSNS), **465-2601** or **1-800-465-2601**
Canadian Mental Health (CMHA), NS Division, **466-6600**
HealthLink, **811**
For the Hearing Impaired, **711**
Links to Mental Health websites can be found on the Mental Health links page.

Services by region

Annapolis

Annapolis Community Health Centre, 532-2381 (ext. 143)
Annapolis County: Bridgetown, 665-4801
Annapolis County Mental Health Clinic, 825-4825
Annapolis Royal: Clare Mental Health Clinic, 645-3470
Addiction Services Kentville, 679-2392
Addiction Services Middleton, 825-6828
CMHA Annapolis County Branch, 665-4801

King's County

CMHA Kings County Branch, 679-7464
Mental Health Services, Kings County: Kentville, 679-7464
Mental Health Services Berwick, 538-3111 Ext 143
Mental Health Services Kentville:
Adult, 679-2657 Ext 2870
Children & Youth, 679-2867 Ext 2873
Mental Health Services Middleton, 825-4825
Middleton: Windsor Mental Health Clinic, 792-2042
SSNS Kings County Chapter, 1-800-465-2601
SSNS Support Group Middleton, 1-800-465-2601

Cape Breton

Cape Breton Health Authority
Addictions, 563-2050
Adult Outpatient Services, 567-7731
Child/Adolescent Services, 567-7731
Emergency Crisis Services, 567-7767
CMHA Cape Breton Branch, 567-7905
Glace Bay Mental Health Clinic, 849-4413
Mental Health Services, Sydney, 567-7735
New Waterford Mental Health Clinic, 862-7195
North Sydney Mental Health Clinic, 794-8551

SSNS Support Group, 1-800-465-2601
Sydney Adult Outpatient Clinic, 567-7730

Halifax County
Capital District Health Authority
Addictions, 424-8866 or Toll-free 1-866-340-6700
Emergency Assessment, NS Hospital, 464-3114
Emergency Assessment, QE11, 473-2043
Mobile Crisis Intervention Service, 429-8167
MH Services Bedford –Sackville, 865-3663
MH Services, Dartmouth, 464-3116 or 463-2187
Abbie Lane Mental Health Outpatient, QEII, 473-2531
IWK Health Centre
Community Mental Health, 422-1611
Child/Adolescent Mental Health Program, 464-4110
IWK Health Centre Community Mental Health, 422-1611
Community Mental Health, Halifax, 454-1400 or 454-1440
Cole Harbour/Eastern HRM, 434-3263
CMHA- Halifax –Dartmouth Branch, 455-5445
SSNS HRM Chapter, 462-5658
Healthy Minds Cooperative, 404-3504
Self-Help Connection, 466-2011
Empowerment Connection, 404-3445
Addictions – CHOICES, 470-630
Mental Health Services Bedford –Sackville, 865-3663
Mental Health Services, Dartmouth, 464-3116
Community Mental Health Dartmouth: 466-1830
Mental Health Services, Hants, 792-2042 Emergency
Mental Health Nurse Advocate, 470-6755
Mobile Crisis Intervention Service, 429-8167 (9am to 5am)
Patient & Family Advocate, 483-9591

Colchester East Hants

Colchester East Hants Health Authority 893-5526
Mental Health Services, 1-800-460-2110 Ext 5526
Addiction Services, 893-5900
SSNS Support Group, 1-800-465-2601
CMHA Colchester/East Hants Branch. 895-4211

Cumberland

Cumberland Health Authority
Cumberland Mental Health Centre, 667-3879
Mental Health Services, 667-3879
Addiction Services (Springhill), 597-8647
Addiction Services (Amherst), 667-7094
SSNS Cumberland Chapter, 1-800-465-2601

Strait Region

Guysborough, Antigonish, Strait Health Authority
Mental Health Services, 863-4511
Addictions Antigonish, 863-5393
Antigonish: St. Martha's Hospital Mental Health Clinic, 863-4511
Addictions Port Hawkesbury, 625-2363
SSNS Support Group, 1-800-465-2601

Pictou County

Pictou County Health Authority
New Glasgow: Aberdeen Mental Health Services, 755-1137
Addictions Services, 755-7017
CMHA Pictou Branch, 752-5578
Mental Health Services, Pictou County: New Glasgow, 755-9441

Queens County

South Shore Health Authority

Liverpool Mental Health Clinic, 354-2721
Mental Health Services, 527-5228
Addiction Services Luneburg, 634-7325
CMHA Lunenburg County Branch, 541-1153
SSNS Lunenburg County Chapter, Toll-free: 1-800-465-2601
Bridgewater: South Shore Regional Hospital Mental Health Services, 527-5228
Bridgewater Mental Health Services 543-7082

South West Region

South West Nova District Health Authority

Yarmouth Regional Hospital
Addiction Services, 742-2406
Mental Health Services, 742-4222

Roseway Hospital, 875 3011
Addiction Services 875-8645

Mental Health Services Shelburne, 875-4200
Mental Health Services Digby, 245-4709

Yarmouth Mental Health Clinic, 742-4222

Addiction Services Digby, 245-5888
CMHA Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne Branch
Yarmouth, 742-0222
Digby, 245-5477
Shelburne, 875-1083
Shelburne Mental Health Clinic, 875-4200
Yarmouth, Digby, Shelburne counties, 742-0222

HELP LINES

Cape Breton/Sydney (6 pm–midnight)
Phone **562-4357**, Toll-free **1-800-957-9995**
Crime Stoppers **1-800-222-8477**
Halifax Regional Municipality (24 hours) **421-1188**
Kids Help Phone (24 hours, bilingual) **1-800-668-6868**
Pictou County (noon–midnight/7 days a week) **752-5952**
Strait/Richmond/Inverness area (6 pm–midnight) **625-5117**

HOUSING

Regional Housing Authorities can provide information about subsidized housing in your area. Also check at your local transition house about second stage housing.

Housing Services Offices

Eastern Region (Cape Breton) Sydney, **563-2120**, Toll-free **1-800-567-2135**
Northern Region:
- Amherst, **667-1161**
- New Glasgow, **755-5065**, Toll-free **1-800-933-2101**
- Truro, **893-5999**, Toll-free **1-866-525-5454**

Central Region:
- Halifax, **424-5110**, Toll-free **1-800-774-5130**

Western Region:
- Bridgewater, **543-7336**, Toll-free **1-800-278-2144**
- Middleton, **825-3481**, Toll-free **1-800-564-3483**

Regional Housing Authorities

Annapolis Valley Service Area: Annapolis, Kings, and Hants counties, **681-3179**, Toll-free **1-800-441-0447**

Cape Breton Island Service Area: Cape Breton, Richmond, Inverness, and Victoria counties, 539-8520, Toll-free 1-800-565-3135
Cobequid Service Area:
  Amherst and Cumberland County, 667-8757, Toll-free 1-800-934-2445
  Truro and Colchester County, 893-7235, Toll-free 1-877-846-0440
Eastern Mainland Service Area: Antigonish, Guysborough, and Pictou counties, 752-1225, Toll-free 1-800-933-2101
Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority Service Area: Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and County, 420-6000, Toll-free 1-800-565-8859
South Shore Service Area:
Lunenburg and Queens counties 543-8200, Toll-free 1-888-845-7208
Tri-County Service Area: Digby, Shelburne, and Yarmouth counties 742-4369, Toll-free 1-800-306-3331

LEGAL AID, LEGAL INFORMATION, AND SERVICES

Besides the services listed below, transition houses can often help you with information about the court process and other legal matters.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

Amherst: Cumberland County 667-7544, Toll-free 1-866-999-7544
Annapolis Royal:
  Annapolis County/Digby 532-2311, Toll-free 1-866-532-2311
Antigonish: Antigonish County 863-3350, Toll-free 1-866-439-1544
Bridgewater:
  Lunenburg County/South Shore 543-4658, Toll-free 1-866-543-4658
Dartmouth 420-8815, Toll-free 1-877-420-8818
Halifax: Dalhousie Legal Aid 423-8105
Halifax: North 420-3450, Toll-free 1-866-420-3450
Halifax: South 420-6583, Toll-free 1-877-777-6583
Kentville 679-6110, Toll-free 1-866-679-6110
New Glasgow: Pictou County 755-7020, Toll-free 1-877-755-7020
Port Hawkesbury 625-4047, Toll-free 1-888-817-0116

Sydney: Cape Breton 563-2295, Toll-free 1-877-563-2295
Truro: Colchester County 893-5920, Toll-free 1-877-777-5920
Windsor: Hants County 798-8397, Toll-free 1-866-798-8397
Yarmouth: South Shore 742-7827, Toll-free 1-866-742-3300

Legal and Justice Support Services

Coverdale Courtwork Services
(Supporting women through the Justice System) Halifax 422-6417
Elizabeth Fry Society (for women in conflict with the law)
Halifax 454-5041, Sydney 539-6165, Toll-free 1-877-619-1354

Legal Information and Lawyer Referral

Dial-A-Law (recorded services 24 hrs/day) 420-1888
Family Law Information Centre (FLIC) 424-5232, Info line 424-8826
Info line & Lawyer Referral Service 455-3135, Toll-free 1-800-665-9779
Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia,
5523B Young St., Hydrostone Market, Halifax, Office 454-2198

MAINTENANCE AND CHILD SUPPORT

Federal Child Support Guidelines

Toll-free 1-888-373-2222

Maintenance Enforcement Program

Head Office 424-0050, InfoLine (24-hour access, Toll-free) 1-800-357-9248
Maintenance Enforcement Program online: www.gov.ns.ca/just/mep

MEN'S PROGRAMS

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs

Amherst/Cumberland County: New Directions 667-1344
Bridgewater/Lunenburg and Queens Counties: Alternatives 543-7444

Halifax: New Start Counselling **423-4675**

Sydney/Cape Breton Island: Second Chance **567-0979**

Truro/Colchester and East Hants counties: Bridges **897-6665**

Westville/New Glasgow, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough counties:
New Leaf **396-2440**

MI'KMAQ SERVICES

Child Help Initiative Project
Liverpool **354-2751**, Sydney **567-1240**, Truro **843-3551**

Micmac Native Friendship Centre: Halifax **420-1576**

Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre: Halifax **422-7850**

Native Council of Nova Scotia, Truro **895-1523**

Native Social Counselling Agency (Provincial) **895-1738**

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association **893-7402**

Welkaqanik Next Step Shelter: Truro **895-1738**

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services

Eskasoni **379-2433**, Toll-free **1-800-263-8300**

Indianbrook **758-3553**, Toll-free **1-800-263-8686**

Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centres

Millbrook First Nation: Truro **893-8483**, Crisis **1-800-565-4741**

Waycobah First Nation: Whycocomagh **756-3440**, Crisis **1-800-565-3440**

Policing

Cape Breton First Nations Communities:
RCMP Operational Communications Centre (OCC)
1-800-803-7267

Mainland First Nations Communities:
Acadia, Wildcat, and Bear River
RCMP OCC **1-800-272-9674**

Annapolis Valley, Horton, Gold River, Cole Harbour, Sheet Harbour
RCMP OCC 1-800-272-9569
Millbrook, Indianbrook, Pictou Landing, Afton
RCMP OCC 1-800-272-9670, Local 893-1323

POLICE AND RCMP – EMERGENCY 911

Please see the blue pages in your phone book for non-emergency Police and the white pages for RCMP numbers (listed under Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in your area. Many RCMP detachments and police departments offer victims' services or victims' assistance programs to help you. Ask if these services are available to you. RCMP TDD 426-7554
Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477

RESOURCES FOR AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN WOMEN

African United Baptist Women's Institute 752-4978
Association of Black Social Workers 429-7799 www.nsasw.org
Black Educators Association 424-7036, Toll-free 1-800-565-3398
thebea.ns.c
Congress of Black Women 462-0344

RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANT AND MIGRANT WOMEN

Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1-888-242-2100, TTY 1-888-576-8502
Cultural Health Information and Interpreting Services 425-5532
Halifax Refugee Clinic 422-6736
Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services 423-3607
YMCA Newcomers Centre 457-9622

RESOURCES FOR WOMEN WHO ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, OR TRANSGENDERED (LGBT)

Lesbian, Gay, Bi Sexual Youth Project 429-5429
Egale Canada 1-888-204-7777
Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project 444-2306
PFLAG Canada Ltd. 1-888-530-6777
Pride Cape Breton 539-4627
Newcomer Navigation Initiative 407-7549
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 424-5230
Toll Free in Nova Scotia 1-877-292-9597 novascotiaimmigration.ca
The Salvation Army - Atlantic Refugee & Immigrant Service 477-5393

RESOURCES FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Disabled Persons Commission: Halifax (provincial),
424-8280, Toll-free 1-800-565-8280
Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities
Phone/TTY 455-6942, Toll-free 1-866-696-7536
reachAbility, Phone/TTY 429-5878, Toll-free/TTY 1-866-429-5878
Caregivers Nova Scotia, 421-7390, Toll-free 1-877-488-7390
DisAbled Women's Network Canada, Toll-free (Canada) 1-866-396-0074

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR SENIOR ABUSE

Senior Abuse Information Line: Call the Senior Abuse Information Line for information on abuse and resources and services available or to talk about a situation of abuse. Your call will be kept confidential. Calls are answered or returned during business hours, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday to Friday (except holidays).

Phone (toll free in NS): 1-877-833-3377

Outside NS: 424-3163
Website: http://www.gov.ns.ca/seniors/senior_abuse_prevention.asp

Seniors' Safety Programs

Seniors' Safety Programs provide information and referral services to seniors. They hold education sessions in their communities and have direct contact with seniors, often through in-home visits by Seniors' Safety Coordinators. You can call a Senior Safety Program for more information about safety issues, to volunteer your time for other seniors, or to discuss your safety concerns.

Some Senior Safety Programs are coordinated by a civilian representative of the RCMP and supervised by the local RCMP detachment.

Community Based Seniors' Safety Programs are run by non-profit boards and work in conjunction with the local police, Crime Prevention Association and a variety of community organizations.

All Senior Safety Programs are a way for seniors and the local police service/community group to work together to help prevent crime and keep communities safe.

RCMP Seniors' Safety Programs:

Annapolis County RCMP
Sharon Elliott- Coordinator
Bridgetown, NS
Phone: 902-665-4481, 902-825-2000, or 902-638-8825
E-mail: sharon.elliott@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Antigonish RCMP
Dona Pottie- Coordinator
Phone: 902-863-6500/seniors' cell: 902-318-0372
E-mail: dona.pottie@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Cole Harbour RCMP
Agnes Elms
Phone: 902-435-0106

Digby RCMP
Dawn Thomas- Coordinator
Phone: 902-245-2579
E-mail: dawn.thomas@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Enfield RCMP
Betty Woolridge and Faye Peach
Phone: 902-883-7077

Fall River RCMP
Nancy MacDonald
Phone: 902-860-4362 or 902-861-3011
http://www.seniorsafetyprogram.caMeteghan RCMP (in English or French)
Hélène Comeau- Coordinator
Phone: 902-645-2326
E-mail: helene.comeau@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Queens County RCMP
Linda Wentzell - Coordinator
Milton, NS
Phone: 902-350-0231
E-mail: linda.wentzell@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Community Based Seniors Safety Programs:

Lunenburg County - Bridgewater Senior's Safety Program
Beth George - Coordinator

Phone: 902-43-3567
E-mail: bgeorge@bridgewater.ca

Cape Breton Regional Municipality –
Community Focus Centre of New Waterford
Holly MacLeod - Coordinator
Phone: 902-862-6001
E-mail: safetyforseniorsincbrm@gmail.com

Eskasoni Elder Safety
Squanto Oakley - Elder Safety Coordinator
Phone: 902-379-3000 Ext. 229
E-mail: eskasonieldersafety@live.ca

Halifax Regional Municipality - Seniors Home Safety Audits
Halifax Regional Police
Phone: 902-490-1534

Hants County Seniors' Safety Program
Tracy Gregory - Coordinator
Phone: 902-798-8380
E-mail: seniorssafety@yahoo.ca
Website: www.seniorsafetyprogram.ca

Kings County Seniors' Safety Program
Michelle Parker - Coordinator
Phone: 902-542-3817
E-mail: michelle@kingsseniorsafety.ca

Pictou County Municipalities Seniors' Safety Program
Barbara Dewtie - Coordinator
Phone: 902-755-2886 Fax: 902-755-5519
E-mail: crimeprevention@bellaliant.net

Shelburne County Senior Safety Society
Shawna Symonds - Coordinator
Phone: 902-637-2015 or 902-875-3945 Fax: 902-637-2015
E-mail: seniorservices@eastlink.ca

Yarmouth County Senior Safety Program
Dianne Crowell - Coordinator
Phone: 902-643-2045
E-mail: janesfund@janesfund.org

Seniors Mental Health Program

Seniors Mental Health Programs: (Interdisciplinary teams specifically tasked with working with seniors within the Health District Authorities listed below)
Capital Health: 902-464-6054 (Dart.)/ 902-473-7799 (Hal.)
Kings/Annapolis counties: 902-679-2870 (Kings)/ 902-825-4825 (Ann.)
Cape Breton District: 902-561-1729

Seniors Mental Health Program
Cape Breton District Health Authority
This program is designed to meet the mental health needs of seniors in the Cape Breton Health District. Health-care professionals experienced in seniors mental health provide assessment, treatment, and information to clients as well as support and information to families and the staff in long-term care facilities. Particular areas of focus are the identification and treatment of seniors with mental illness and the management of challenging behaviours. A variety of services are available, including health promotion, education, outreach (home visitations), clinic appointments, and regularly scheduled clinics in long-term care facilities within the district. Staff work in consultation with a local psychiatrist, family physicians (both within the community and long-term care facilities) and periodically, a local geriatrician.

For more information, contact:
Sheri Whiting, Program Secretary
Phone: 902-567-1729

Seniors' Mental Health Service
Capital Health

This service is designed to meet the mental health needs of people aged 65 and older. A variety of services are available, including health promotion, education, outreach (home visitations), group based offerings, and in-patient programs.

The Seniors' Day Program offers education and support to seniors who experience anxiety and depression. Educational groups focus on learning positive habits for healthy living, coping with grief, relaxation, and dealing with negative thinking.

Health-care professionals experienced in the field of seniors mental health provide treatment and information to clients as well as support and information to family members. An emphasis is placed on providing services in the home or community setting. A person's mental health is as important as his or her physical health. The Seniors' Mental Health Service encourages seniors to access help when required.

Nova Scotia Hospital site Phone: 902-464-6054
Or Queen Elizabeth II site Phone: 902-473-7799

Seniors' Mental Health Service
Kings and Annapolis counties

This service, coordinated by a nurse and delivered by social work, occupational therapy, and psychology professionals, is designed to meet the mental health needs of seniors. Assessments and home visits are provided by a nurse and psychiatrist. Family physicians are involved throughout the process. Education, early memory loss groups and support groups are offered for individuals with dementia and their families. Regular consultation with all nursing homes in the counties is also provided. Team members are open to input from consumers and families with their ideas on how to further develop the service.

Kings County, Phone: **902-679-2870**
Or Annapolis County, Phone: **902-825-4825**

RESOURCES/INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE

Transition houses and women's centres will also have resources and information about woman abuse and family violence.

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Toll-free **1-800-267-1291**
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women,
424-8662, Toll-free **1-800-565-8662**

SECOND STAGE HOUSING

Second stage housing offers safe and affordable housing for abused women and their children. You can also contact through your local transition house.

Antigonish: Naomi Society **863-3807**
Metro: Alice Housing **466-8459**
New Glasgow: Pictou County Second Stage Housing **928-0970**
Sydney: Cape Breton Transition House **562-4190**
Truro: Welkaqanik Next Step Shelter (priority to Aboriginal women) **895-1738**

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

IWK Health Centre: Women's Clinic, Halifax **470-8888**

The following were formerly known as Planned Parenthood Nova Scotia.
Amherst: Sexual Health Centre for Cumberland Co. **667-7500**
Bridgewater: Sexual Health Centre Lunenburg Co. **527-2868**
Halifax: Halifax Sexual Health Centre **455-9656**
New Glasgow: Pictou Co. Centre for Sexual Health **695-3366**
Sheet Harbour: Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre **885-2789**
Sydney: Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health **539-5158**
Yarmouth: Yarmouth Centre for Sexual Health **742-0085**

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES

Halifax: Avalon Sexual Assault Centre **422-4240**, Crisis Line **425-0122**
Truro: Colchester Sexual Assault Centre **897-4366**

SUPPORT/REFERRAL/ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

These community and women's organizations can provide information or refer you to services or support groups. Also check listings under Transition Houses, Health, and Family Resource Centres. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (**1-800-670-4357**) may also have listings of groups or programs in your community.

Community Organizations

Dartmouth: Self Help Connection **466-2011**, Toll-free **1-866-765-6639**
Halifax: YWCA **423-6162**
New Glasgow: Pictou County YM/YWCA **752-0202**

Women's Centres

Provide a range of programs, information, advocacy and referral services for women.

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, 219 Main St, Suite 204 **863-6221**
Annapolis: The Women's Place Resource Centre
86 Atlantic, P.O. Box 254 Cornwallis Park, Nova Scotia B0S 1H0
638-8566 womensplaceresourcecentre.com
Halifax: Dalhousie University Women's Centre, 6286 South St. **494-2432**
Halifax: Saint Mary's University Women's Centre, 526 Student Centre **496-8722**
Lunenburg: Second Story Women's Centre, 22 King St. **543-1315**
Women's Centres Connect: Nova Scotia Association of Women's Centres
P.O. Box 309, 22 King St., Lunenburg, Nova Scotia B0J 2C0 **640-2197**
womenconnect.ca
New Glasgow: Pictou County Women's Centre, 503 South Frederick St. **755-4647**
Sheet Harbour: LEA Place Women's Centre, 17 Behie St. **885-2668**
Sydney: Every Woman's Centre, 102 Townsend St. **567-1212**
Truro: Central Nova Women's Resource Centre, 535 Prince St. **895-4295**
Wolfville: Acadia University Women's Centre, Student Union Building, **585-2140**
Yarmouth: TRI County Women's Centre, 126 Brunswick St. **742-0085**, Toll-free **1-877-742-0085**

Provincial Women's Organizations

Fédération des femmes acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Dartmouth **433-0065**

TRANSITION HOUSES AND SHELTERS

Transition houses offer emergency shelter, information, and support for women in abusive relationships. For more information on services call the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia **429-7287**

Amherst: Autumn House (Wheelchair accessible) (will accept collect calls) Crisis line **667-1200**, Office **667-1344**

Antigonish: Naomi Society, Office/Crisis **863-3807** Will accept collect calls **1-888-831-0330** www.naomisociety.ca

Bridgewater: Harbour House (Wheelchair ramp), Crisis line **543-3999** Office **543-3665**, Outreach **543-9970**, Toll-free **1-800-543-3999**

Digby: Juniper Outreach **245-4789**, Toll-free **1-800-266-4087**

Halifax: Adsum House (For homeless women and children) **429-4443** and **423-4443**

Halifax: Barry House (Emergency shelter for homeless women and children at risk) **422-8324**

Halifax: Bryony House (Wheelchair ramp, one room accessible, accessible bathroom, bilingual staff as required) 24 hr Crisis line **422-7650**, Office **429-9002**, Outreach **429-9001**

Kentville: Chrysalis House (Two bilingual staff, wheelchair ramp, one large room, bathroom accessible), Crisis line **679-1922** Office **679-6544**, Outreach **679-1155**, Toll-free **1-800-264-8682**

New Glasgow: Tearmann Society (Wheelchair ramp, main floor accessible) Crisis line **752-0132**, Office **752-1633**, Outreach **752-2591** Toll-free **1-888-831-0330**

Port Hawkesbury: Leeside Transition House (Wheelchair accessible) Crisis line **625-2444**, Office **625-1990**, Outreach **625-1106** Toll-free **1-800-565-3390**

Sydney: Cape Breton Transition House (Wheelchair lift, bilingual staff as required) Crisis line **539-2945**, Office **562-3864** Outreach Program **562-3045**, Toll-free **1-800-563-2945** Children's Services **562-1336**

Truro: Third Place (Wheelchair ramp, one room, partial bath, and common areas accessible) Crisis line **893-3232**, Office **893-4844** Outreach **895-9740**, Toll-free **1-800-565-4878**

Yarmouth: Juniper House, Crisis line **742-8689**, Office **742-4473** Outreach **742-0231**, Toll-free **1-800-266-4087**

VICTIM SERVICES

Victim Services of the Department of Justice provides information and confidential support services to victims of crime and their families. Check also with your local RCMP detachment, police department, or transition house for support and assistance in family violence cases.

Department of Justice Victim Services

Head Office: Halifax **424-3309**, Toll-free **1-888-470-0773**
Annapolis, Kings, Hants, Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne,
 and Yarmouth counties: Kentville **679-6201**, Toll-free **1-800-565-1805**
Cape Breton, Richmond, Inverness, and Victoria counties:
 Sydney **563-3655**, Toll-free **1-800-565-0071**
Halifax Regional Municipality: Dartmouth **424-3307**
Pictou, Guysborough, Antigonish, Colchester, and Cumberland counties:
 New Glasgow **755-7110**, Toll-free **1-800-565-7912**

Police-Based Victim Services

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services Unit **490-5300**

YOUR OWN LIST OF PHONE NUMBERS

	Phone number

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
PO Box 745
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T3

Phone: (902) 424-8662
Toll-free 1-800-565-8662
Fax: (902) 424-0573

E-mail: women@gov.ns.ca
Websites: www.women.gov.ns.ca
www.nsdomesticviolence.ca